

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

HAL HALMAN'S TIP; OR, SCOOPING THE WALL STREET MARKET.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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Hal Halman's Tip

OR, SCOOPING THE WALL STREET MARKET

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.—Hal's Narrow Escape.

"Say, Hal, you want to keep your eyes skinned for Titus Gregory. He's down on you like a car-load of bricks," said Will Chambers.

"Tell me something I don't know, Will," replied Hal Halman. "I've not been asleep since I came here, and I can read a man as well as the next one. I know he's down on me, but I haven't given him any cause that I know of. However, I don't care, and won't lose any sleep over the matter. I'm not afraid of him, or anything he can do to me, for I attend to business right up to the handle, and the boss is perfectly satisfied with me."

"Well, I thought I'd warn you, for I don't want to see Gregory get his hooks into you. I don't like him myself even a little bit. He's got a bad eye, and in my opinion is not a man to be trusted. I don't see how Mr. Glass ever hired him as his cashier. If I was the boss I'd be afraid to trust him with the key of the big safe, let alone the general management of the counting-room."

The two boys had just arrived at the office in Wall Street, where they were employed as messengers by Broker Glass. They were particular friends and traveled around Harlem, where they both lived, a great deal together.

At the time we introduce them to the reader they were in their employer's private room looking out of the window at the stream of clerks and girl stenographers on their way to work in the various buildings in the neighborhood. The frequent opening and shutting of the door off the corridor in the next room, where a space was railed off for the accommodation of the customers and other visitors, indicated that the clerks of the office were dropping in fast. The last to arrive was Titus Gregory. He was a man of average build, with a dark, saturnine face, which never bore a good-natured smile.

His black, beady eyes twinkled restlessly underneath beetling brows, and the stubbly mustache, which failed to hide a cruel mouth, bristled more like fine quills than hairs. He was not a favorite in the office among the clerks, who feared his roving glances, and minded their P's and Q's even when his back was turned on them. Mr. Glass had hired him because he came well recommended, and his executive ability and sharp business tactics enabled him to fill the bill to the satisfaction of the broker. He looked around the ante-room

as he walked toward the counting-room gate, and noticed that the messengers were not in their seats. A frown settled on his countenance. Without a friendly nod to a soul in the room he went to the safe and opened it without hanging up his hat. The clerks came up and got their books and papers as usual.

"Haven't Halman and Chambers got here yet?" he asked the second book-keeper.

"Yes, sir. They were outside when I came in."

"They're not outside now."

"Maybe they're in the private room."

"What are they doing in there?" asked the cashier, sharply.

"I couldn't tell you, sir. They go in there sometimes before work begins."

"They do, eh? I'll teach them to stay where they belong," almost hissed Titus Gregory.

He strode out of the counting-room and crossed the waiting-room. There was a savage glare in his eyes that boded no good to the boys. At that moment the young messengers had spied a couple of girl friends of theirs on the opposite side of the street. They put their fingers to their mouths and uttered shrill whistles to attract the attention of the young ladies.

This wasn't the first time the fair stenographers had been saluted in that way by them, and the misses looked up, recognized them, and smiled beamingly at them. While the two boys were at the open window, laughing and waving their hands at the two girls in the street, Gregory entered the office. Picking up a ledger, he stole behind the boys ready to deal Hal a blow. He stood there with the heavy book poised in both hands, and a fiendish look on his evil face.

He had been waiting a long time for an excuse to jump on the lad with both feet, and he gloated over the fact that the time had come at last. He hated Hal with all his heart, and for reasons which only himself knew. He meant to lay the boy out good and hard, and was only waiting for Hal to turn and see him. It happened, however, that it was Will who turned around first. Although he had heard no sound in the office, something seemed to tell him that they were not alone. He looked around and perceived the presence of the cashier and his menacing attitude toward Hal.

Seeing that he was discovered, Gregory was about to bring the book down on Halman's head when Will, with an ejaculation of alarm, gave

Hal a shove that sent him staggering away from the window just as the ledger descended with considerable force. The end of the book hit Will's arm and bore it down like a flash, while the cashier pitched forward, owing to the little resistance the blow met with, and would have fallen out of the window, after striking the sill, only the two boys caught his jacket and pulled him back.

Instead of expressing any gratitude to them he turned on Hal, with a face purple with rage, and ordered him out of the room, biting his lips with impotent fury at having missed his purpose. Will walked after him and joined Hal at their chairs.

"I saved you from a broken head that time," he said.

"Was he going to hit me with that book?" asked Hal.

"Was he? Well, say, there was murder in his eyes," replied Will with solemn earnestness. "I never saw him look that way before."

"Surely he didn't intend to hit me on the head with that ledger?" said Hal. "Why, he might have killed me."

"He was aiming at your head. I had only just time to shove you out of the way when the book came down. My arm is numb where he struck me," and Will rubbed his lame arm vigorously.

"He's a vicious rascal," said Hal. "One would think I'd done something particularly bad to him. I guess you were right in advising me to look out sharp for him, for it looks as if nothing would suit him better than to do me up."

"That's what I think; and I never thought so more than now. He certainly has it in for you, and he's a bad man to have for an enemy."

At that moment the cashier called Will and sent him out with a message. Soon afterward Hal was handed a bunch of stock certificates to carry to three different transfer offices. When he got back to the office there was an envelope waiting for him to take over to the boss, who was at the Stock Exchange. The market was lively that morning, as one of the stocks had boomed several points.

It happened to be a stock that Hal was interested in to the extent of 100 shares. A broker for whom he had done a special favor a month before, had tipped him off to a coming rise in the stock, known by the initials of D. & R., and Hal, who was something of a small speculator on the quiet, had put up all his capital, \$1,000, as marginal security on the shares. He had bought them ten days before at 86, and they were now going at 94. Naturally he felt good when he saw that the expected boom had set in. At this stage of the game he was \$800 ahead on his deal, not counting expenses, and judging from what the broker told him, he expected to make \$1,500 at any rate. While he stood at the rail waiting to deliver his note, the price went up half a point more.

There was a lot of business done in the board-room that day, for the lambs were coming down to the Street and investing their little wads. They always did that when a bull market was on. At ten minutes of three Gregory sent Hal to the bank with the day's deposits, and while stand-

ing in the line before the receiving teller's window, he heard a man tell his neighbor that D. & R. was up to par, and would doubtless go higher on the following day.

After he got off for the day with Will, he dropped in at the little bank on Nassau street and told the margin clerk to sell his shares at eleven o'clock next morning. He signed the order to that effect and left. A few minutes after eleven on the following day the market suddenly slumped, and Hal was in a fever of uncertainty all day as to the fate of his deal. Not until he visited the little bank at ten minutes of four did he learn that his stock had been sold at the top price of 102 and a fraction. In a few minutes he figured up his profit at \$1,600, and then shook hands with himself, for the highest amount he had made in any of his previous deals was something over \$300.

CHAPTER II—Robbed.

"Hal, I want you," said Mr. Glass one afternoon as the two messengers were calculating that it was pretty near time for them to go home.

"Yes, sir," replied Hal, jumping up and following his employer into his private room.

"I want you to take this package to Edwin Black at his home in Newtown, New Jersey. His address is on it. He lives near the center of the village, two blocks from Main street. You will cross over to Jersey City, and take the Newtown and Westlake trolley car, which you will find within a few steps of the ferry entrance. Here is a dollar to pay your expenses. You may keep the change. Start at once."

"All right, sir."

"Be careful of that packet, for it contains a \$1,000 United States bond, which being of the coupon kind, is easily negotiable. Put it in your inside pocket."

Hal walked outside, told Will where he was going, and left the office.

A sporty-looking man of perhaps twenty-five years, who had been standing at the cashier's window for as long as fifteen minutes talking in a low tone to Titus Gregory, started for the door as Hal passed out into the corridor. Instead of taking the elevator he ran down the stairs and landed in the main entrance of the building at the moment Hal stepped out of the elevator. The young messenger started for the Cortlandt street ferry and the sporty young man fell in behind him. They both reached the ferry-house in the same relative positions that they left Wall Street, and purchased ferry tickets one after the other and boarded the same boat.

Reaching the other side, Hal found that there was no car marked Newtown on hand, but one came along in a few moments, and after its passengers had got out, he boarded it. The sporty man waited till the car was on the point of starting with a dozen passengers, and then he got on and seated himself beside Hal. It was quite a ride to Newtown, and the trip would take upward of an hour. The sporty man took out an afternoon paper and was soon apparently absorbed in the sporting page. The baseball season was about to open, and there were pictures

of some new players that were going to play with the New York Nationals that year. They made a great showing at the training quarters, and much was expected of them.

"What do you think of the chances of the New Yorks winning the pennant this year?" said the sport to Hal.

"I haven't figured on it," replied the boy.

"They have a strong team this season, and McGraw, their manager, says he's going to cop the flag."

"He said the same thing last year at this time, and the Giants didn't land higher than fourth place."

"He's got hold of four corking players, young blood, who are said to be wonders. There's their pictures," and the sport leaned up against Hal, as he pushed the paper in front of his eyes.

He then talked glibly about the past performances of the new men, and about the relative merits of the other leading teams of the league. Hal listened to him and concluded from his talk that he was a died-in-the-wool fan. What he didn't know about baseball seemed hardly worth considering. He also wondered if the fellow was a street salesman, or perhaps a professional bark-er for some summer show, for he certainly could talk like a house afire. And while he kept up his talk the car went bowling along at a rapid rate till it stopped at the junction of two tracks. Newtown lay in one direction and Westlake in another, and every second car went to one or the other of the towns.

"Take the car behind for Newtown," shouted the conductor.

"I've got to get out here," said Hal, getting up.

"So have I," replied the sport, following him out.

The car behind was not in sight.

"How long before the Newtown car will be along?" asked Hal of the conductor.

"Five minutes or so," answered the man, giving the bell a tug, and the car went on its way.

"This changing cars is a great nuisance," said Hal.

"That's what it is," coincided the sport. "Come into the saloon and have a drink."

A two-story building with a drinking bar was the only house in the immediate vicinity.

"You'll have to excuse me. I don't drink," replied Hal.

"Take a soda, anyway," urged his companion.

"No, I don't care for any."

The sport looked disappointed.

"Ever been out this way before?" he asked.

"No," replied Hal.

"Then you're not acquainted with Newtown?"

"Not at all."

"I thought maybe you were. I've got to call on a Mr. Edwin Black, who lives on a street called Myrtle avenue. I thought maybe you could show me where his place is."

"Edwin Black!" exclaimed Hal, in some surprise. "Why, I'm going to visit him myself."

"You don't say! How odd that we should both be bound for the same house."

"Yes, it is."

"All I know is that he lives down near the lake."

"Why, I was told that he lived near the center of the village, about two blocks from Main

street. I've got the number of his house, so we ought to have no trouble in going there," said Hal.

"That's funny. My directions were that he lived in a house facing the lake."

"We'll see when we get to his place. I didn't know there was a lake at Newtown."

"There is. Westlake is at the other end of it."

At this point the car came along and they got on board. Half an hour later the car stopped at the head of Main street, the end of the route, and Hal, followed by the sport, alighted.

"I'll inquire in this store where Mr. Black lives," said the young man, heading Hal off as he was about to do the same thing. Hal, however, followed him in. The only person in the store was the proprietor, and he was fixing some of his stock in trade at the far end. The sport hustled over to him and made his inquiries. Hal remained at the door waiting for him to rejoin him.

"I knew I was right," said the other, when he returned. "He lives down facing the lake."

"There may be two Blacks in this place."

"I asked for Edwin Black, retired lawyer of New York," said the sport as they left the store. "By the way, I haven't asked your name. Mine is Gabe Case."

"My name is Hal Halman."

"Thanks. Now we know each other," said Case. "The lake is over this way."

Hal, wondering how it was that Mr. Glass had directed him wrongly, accompanied his talkative companion. Inside of ten minutes they came in sight of the lake, glistening in the last rays of the declining sun. They passed several pretty homes standing back in extensive grounds, one of which was Mr. Black's.

Clearly Gabe Case had some special reason for leading Hal down to the lake. When they reached the water they saw a number of fine villas facing the lake, which was quite a large and charming body of water. Hal was quite taken with it, and also with the several handsome little sloops moored off the ends of the private wharves. He was something of an amateur boatman, being a member of a Harlem yacht club, which had a club-house and a number of sloops at the foot of one of the streets ending at the North River.

"That's Black's place," said Case, pointing at one of the residences, which was embowered in trees.

Hal accepted his word for it, and entered the gate when his companion held it open for him. As he passed through he received a tremendous clout under the ear from Case's fist which stretched him dazed upon the shrubbery. In a twinkling the sport bent over him, rifled his pockets of the package, gave him another smash in the face, and skinned out at the gate.

Hal soon recovered from the rough handling he had received, and got on his feet to find himself alone. His astonishment and anger at the unexpected assault was great, and he could not understand it at first. Then he thought of his valuable package, put his hand in his pocket and found it gone. At once he understood that his companion had played a crooked trick on him. He rushed out at the gate and looked around for Case. At first he saw no signs of him, but finally

when he glanced toward the water he saw the rascal rowing away from one of the small wharves. Hal dashed for the dock at once. The sport saw him coming, but seemed to consider himself safe from immediate capture, as quite a space of water lay between them.

He rowed alongside one of the sloops, moored to a floating buoy, and stepped on board. By that time Hal reached the end of the dock and was shouting at him. Case put his fingers to his nose and executed a derisive bit of pantomime, thereby adding insult to injury. Hal wondered what the fellow intended to do. He was not kept long in ignorance. The sport began hurriedly to cast the stops loose from the mainsail Hal knew then that he intended to steal off in the boat. Probably his object was to sail down to Westlake and slip back to New York.

There was a good breeze blowing and he could easily do this if he knew how to handle the boat. Hal was a boy of resolution, and determined to stop him if he could. There was a rowboat tied to the next dock with the oars peeping over the gunwale. Hal dashed around to the wharf, jumped into the boat, unmoored, and began rowing out toward the sloop. Case saw him coming and hastened his movements. He hoisted the mainsail in a hurry, then ran up the little jib, and whipping out a knife, cut the mooring rope and rushed back to the cockpit, where he seized the rudder handle and put the boat before the wind. Hal was close to her when the boat began to forge ahead.

"Don't you wish you might catch me, you lobster?" laughed the sport, favoring his pursuer with another derisive bit of pantomime. The wind caught the sails and carried the sloop rapidly out of Hal's reach.

CHAPTER III—The Chase and Its Results.

Hal was mad as a hornet when he saw that the rascal was escaping him. What to do now he did not know until his eyes lighted on a sloop similar in size and build to the one Case was on lying close by. Instantly it occurred to him to take the sloop and chase the thief. It was the only chance of overhauling the fugitive; but he hesitated, for he knew he had no right to appropriate the boat to his own use. Still there was \$1,000 at stake, and he believed he would be justified in using any means at his disposal to capture the rascal and recover the bond. There was no time to be lost in making his decision. The look of malicious triumph on the sport's face determined his course.

"I'll show him that I'm no lobster," he muttered, turning the head of his boat toward the sloop.

In a few moments he was on board, releasing and hoisting the sail. The rascal saw what he was about, and he didn't like it a bit, for he guessed Hal must know how to handle a sailboat or he wouldn't venture to make the attempt. However, as he had a fair lead he flattered himself that he would be able to outsail his pursuer. All things being equal, he argued that his chance was a good one. Both boats being of the same size, he didn't apprehend that the one Hal was aboard of could catch up with him.

While Hal was hoisting the jib a boy of his own age ran out from the house facing the wharf and shouted to him. Hal paid no attention to him. The boy ran down on the wharf, jumped into another rowboat and began pulling toward him. Hal unmoored the sloop, but held the line in his hands, waiting for the other boy to come nearer.

"What do you mean by taking our boat?" cried the well-dressed youth, turning his head as the rowboat glided close to the sloop.

"Come aboard and I'll tell you."

The other boy grabbed the stern of the sloop and stepped on board, making the painter fast to a cleat. While he was doing it Hal let go of the mooring line, and as the boat's head fell away he ran back to the cockpit and, seizing the rudder, put the sloop on her course after the other boat.

"Hold on," said the other youth, "this is our boat. You have no right to take her."

"I know I haven't, but I'm doing it just the same."

"I order you to get out of the way," said the boy, grabbing the tiller.

Hal resisted his efforts to change the boat's head.

"I want to catch that boat ahead," he said in an insistent tone.

"Chase that boat!" cried the youth. "That is Archie Lloyd's sloop."

"Archie Lloyd isn't in her. She's been stolen by a rascal."

"Get out!" cried the other, incredulously.

"Well, I guess you know Lloyd, don't you?"

"Of course I know him. He's my chum, and lives in the next house to ours."

"Well, look at that boat and you'll see that there's a stranger in her."

The youth looked and saw that Hal spoke the truth.

"That chap has stolen a \$1,000 United States bond from me that I brought here to deliver to Mr. Edwin Black. I suppose you know the gentleman?"

"Sure I know him. He's a friend of father's."

"I met that chap in the boat, who told me his name was Case, on the trolley car that brought me to Newtown village. He got aboard at Jersey City soon after I did. I don't know how he came to surmise that I had anything valuable about me, for I never said a word about my business to him. He made himself very friendly, and took me off my guard. Mr. Glass, my boss, who is a Wall Street broker, told me that Mr. Black lived on Myrtle avenue, two blocks from Main street."

"So he does," said the other lad, so interested in Hal's story that he made no further attempt to interfere with him.

"That chap told me he was going to call on Mr. Black, too, and insisted that the gentleman lived on the lake shore."

"He didn't know what he was talking about."

"He didn't want to know. His object was to decoy me down to the lake so he could knock me out and rob me."

"You don't say!"

Hal told him how the rascal had made a bluff of asking the store-keeper where Mr. Black lived, and then said it was down on the lake front.

He went on to tell how they had come down to the shore and then Case had pointed out one of the houses as Mr. Black's. Then he told his companion all that happened after that.

"What a nerve he had to run off with Archie's boat," said the other.

"Well, I imitated him, you see, but it was in a good cause, for I can't afford to lose that bond."

"Of course you can't. So you work for a New York broker?"

"Yes."

"What's your name?"

"Hal Halman. What's yours?"

"Dick Cunningham. My father is vice-president of the D. L. & C. road. That is our house in front of the wharf near where this sloop lay moored."

"Well, Dick, I hope you will excuse me for taking possession of this boat under the circumstances."

"That's all right. It's my boat, and I'm aboard of her with you, anyway."

"We don't seem to be overhauling the other sloop very fast. Is that boat faster than yours?"

"No; but we are dragging two skiffs behind us, and that makes a lot of difference. That fellow hasn't anything to hold him back."

"I know he hasn't, for he let the rowboat go after getting aboard of the sloop."

"I'll tie the two skiffs together and let them float off. Archie and I will recover them tomorrow. I want to do all I can to help you catch that fellow."

"Thanks. You are very kind."

"You're welcome. I rather like you, and I am sure you've told me the truth."

"There's one of my boss' cards," said Hal, handing him a pasteboard.

Dick Cunningham glanced at it and put it in his pocket. Then he proceeded to loosen the painters of the two skiffs. Having accomplished that, he tied the ends together and flung the ropes over. The boats slowly floated away. Relieved of the double drag, the sloop's speed increased materially, and they began to gain on the boat ahead. The town of Westlake was now in full sight ahead. If Case could reach one of the landing places, or in fact any part of the shore, in time to avoid contact with his pursuer, he stood a good chance of eluding Hal in the streets, gaining the trolley, and making his escape.

Dick assured Hal that they would be able to catch Archie Lloyd's sloop before she could reach a landing near the town.

"I'm glad to hear it."

"I'll help you capture the fellow," said Dick, his eyes twinkling with excitement at the prospect of a run-in with the fugitive.

"I guess I can handle him alone even if he is older than I am. I don't want you to get into any trouble on my account."

"I am ready to help you, anyway. You don't want to take any chances of losing that bond," said Dick.

"I know I don't. I'm much obliged to you for the offer."

"Don't mention it. I know we'll bring him to."

"How?"

"I've got a small magazine rifle in the cabin,

stowed away in a locker. I'll get it out and frighten him into giving up," said Dick.

"Hold on. You might hit him, and then that would get us both into trouble."

"I won't aim at him. Just shoot over his head."

Hal wasn't in favor of such a proceeding, but Dick insisted on doing it, and he couldn't stop his companion. The sport evidently saw that he was being overhauled, and doubted if he could reach Westlake in time to give Hal the slip. He had noted the fact that Hal had been joined by the boy whom he judged owned the pursuing sloop, and he figured he would have small chance of getting away from the two unless he adopted different tactics.

Glancing around he saw that the opposite shore of the lake was closer to him than the town he was approaching, so he altered the sloop's course and ran for the bluffs where he saw the chance of landing and eluding his pursuers in the gloom that was coming on. Hal suspected his purpose and changed his course, too.

"He's running for the shore now," he said when Dick made his appearance with the rifle.

"Never mind. This will cause him to haul in his horses," said Dick.

Aiming well above the sport's head, he fired. The bullet whizzed through the mainsail. Case, who was not looking at them at the time, turned around in a startled way when he heard the crack of the rifle. He saw Dick pointing the weapon straight at him. In a moment he slipped down out of sight in the cockpit. Dick fired again, and the ball chipped a piece out of the cabin roof. Case, thinking they meant business, kept out of sight, but showed no intention of giving up.

"I'd like to hit his hand where he's holding onto the tiller," said Dick, taking aim at the spot he supposed it was and firing again.

No result followed, so he quit shooting.

"That chap is pretty clever. He knows how to sail a boat, and he'll probably reach shore before we can come up with him," said Hal.

"I can hold him up when he starts to jump ashore, for he'll have to show himself then," said Dick.

"Suppose he declines to be held up, and runs the risk of you shooting him, you wouldn't dare to fire directly at him," said Hal.

"No; but I can make a good bluff at it. He wouldn't get down out of sight if he wasn't afraid I was trying to hit him."

With the setting of the sun the wind had calmed down to a soft breeze, and the two boats lost a good bit of their headway.

If there was any advantage in this change it went to the boat ahead, which was able to outfoot her pursuer a little in light wind, therefore the boys failed to gain any more on the chase. They could see Case pop up his head occasionally to take a look at them, and also at the shore which he was fast nearing.

"He'll probably run into that creek yonder," said Dick, pointing at a spot where the bluff was highest—maybe forty feet. "It's too shallow for him to go more than a dozen feet when the Queen will take the ground. Of course, he'll jump out and run up the gully there. That will give him an advantage, for there are lots of spots where he can hide."

"That's too bad," said Hal, feeling a bit dis-

heartened for the first time. "It will soon be dark, and then he'll get clean off. Give me your gun, Dick, and you take charge of the boat. I think I'm justified in taking strenuous measures in order to prevent him getting away with his plunder."

"I think you are, too. A thousand dollars is a lot to lose. He'll be able to sell that bond without much trouble, as you say it's a coupon one."

"I'd give something to know what made him think I was worth robbing," said Hal.

"I don't suppose he expected to get much."

"I had two dollars in my vest pocket and forty cents in my pants' pocket. He did not attempt to take either. He did not search me for anything more than that package. What puzzles me is what made him suspect the package was valuable. It might have contained only a legal paper, or something of that kind, for all he could tell by the outside. The whole business looks mighty funny to me," said Hal.

The other boat was now close to the shore. Case had made out the creek and was heading into it.

"Head across a little so I can catch a sight of him when he jumps ashore," said Hal.

Dick did so. The Queen slop shot into the creek and then grounded on the shallows. Case, who had jumped up as soon as he thought he was out of sight of his pursuers, lost his balance from the shock, which he was not expecting, and fell overboard.

"He's overboard in the creek," cried Hal, excitedly. "Head right in, and maybe we'll catch him before he can get out."

The water wasn't deep and the sport scrambled out quickly, but by that time the other boat was almost on top of him.

As he started to flee Hal covered him with the rifle and called on him to stop.

"Throw up your hands or I'll put a ball into you," he cried, resolutely.

Case turned and saw that the boy could easily carry out his threat, so he sullenly yielded to the inevitable. As the boat ran up behind the Queen and stopped, Hal sprang ashore and kept the sport under the muzzle of the weapon.

"Come ashore, Dick, and search him for a package addressed to Mr. Black," said Hal.

Dick lost no time in doing as he was requested, and he soon pulled the packet out of Case's pocket.

"Here it is," he said, after looking at the superscription to make sure that he had the right thing.

"Thank you, Dick. Now, Mr. Case, you can go about your business. I ought to have you arrested, but it's too much trouble. How did you come to steal that instead of my money?"

"That's my business," replied the sport, turning on his heel and walking away from the spot.

They watched him go, and then turned their attention to the two boats.

"We'll take the Queen in tow," said Dick. "Give me a hand at furling her sails."

Hal willingly obliged him. Then they temporarily dropped the sails of their own boat till they got her out of the creek.

Attaching the mooring of the Queen to a cleat, they hoisted the sails again and started on their return trip.

"It will take us some time to get back, for the wind is light and the Queen will be a drag on us. I shall miss my dinner, but that doesn't make any difference. The cook will keep it warm for me," said Dick.

"I'm sorry I've given you so much trouble," replied Hal.

"Ho! I've had a bang-up time which I didn't expect. You shall come to the house and have your dinner with me."

"I'm much obliged to you, Dick; but that's too much for you to do for a comparative stranger."

"I don't consider you a stranger now. I hope you'll come down some Saturday afternoon and stay with me over Sunday. My folks won't object. I'll introduce you to my friend Archie. He'll want to know you when I tell him about the time we have had together. You'll find him a first-class fellow," said Dick.

"Thank you for the invitation. I shall be glad to accept it," returned Hal.

They talked together like old friends on the trip back. The two rowboats were picked up. It was after nine when they landed at the private wharf, and Hal accompanied his friend to his house where they had dinner together.

Dick then took him around to Mr. Black's home, and there Hal explained the reason he was so late in coming.

Then Dick went with him to the trolley line, and they parted there with many expressions of friendship on both sides.

CHAPTER V.—Hal Has His Suspicions of Gregory.

Hal had a stirring story to tell his friend Will Chambers next morning when they met at the office before the clerks got there.

"You were mighty lucky to recover that package, Hal," said Will when his friend had finished.

"You can bet I was. The rascal almost got away with it even when we chased him right into the creek. It is really a mystery to me how he came to rob me of it. It would seem as if he knew beforehand that I had the package containing the bond in my possession. Yet how could he know it? I never said a word to him about my errand to Newtown."

"Did you say he was a sporty-looking fellow?" said Will.

"Yes."

"Between twenty and thirty years of age?"

"Yes."

"Smooth face, and wore a flashy red necktie?"

"Yes; how did you guess that? I didn't tell you."

"Had on rather a loud check suit, didn't he?"

"He did. Say, how in thunder came you to know his description so well?" asked Hal in astonishment.

"Because I saw such a chap in this room yesterday afternoon talking with the cashier through his window. He came in just as the boss called you into his room to send you on that errand, and he was chinning to Gregory when you came out, got your hat and started off. I remember now he followed you outside."

"The dickens you say!" cried Hal.

"Doesn't that give you a pointer on the mystery? Gregory must have known that Mr. Glass was going to send you to Newton with the \$1,000 bond. He put the fellow on to you, and no doubt if the sporty chap got away with the bond they'd have whacked up between them, while you might have got fired for losing the security."

"Gracious, Will! I believe you're right," said Hal.

"I guess I am. How else could the rascal know that you carried it in your pocket?"

"That's right. Titus Gregory is a scoundrel if he put that job up on me."

"He was a scoundrel to try and brain you with that book yesterday morning. He's trying to do you, and he won't let up till he reaches you somehow."

"I'd like to know why he's taken such a fierce dislike to me."

"I'll never tell you. I don't understand it. You can't be too watchful, old man. He's as slick as the Old Boy. However, it ought to be a great satisfaction to you to know that you've disappointed him twice inside of twenty-four hours."

"I shall tell all the facts to Mr. Glass at the first chance, and he may put the police on to Gabe Case. I don't suppose that's his real name, though, but that doesn't matter. I can give a good description of him."

"You could tell him, too, that a man very like the chap who robbed you of the bond was in here talking to Gregory. You might have seen him if you had used your eyes when you came out from the boss."

"I was in a hurry to get away."

"Well, tell Mr. Glass that I saw him. The cashier will have to admit that he was talking to the person in question, for I can swear I saw him."

"I'll tell him; but I dare say Gregory will say that he didn't know Case."

"You can't help that. He isn't going to give himself away."

At this point in their conversation the cashier came in. He looked as grouchy as usual and walked straight into the counting-room. Hal was out on an errand when the broker appeared at the office, and it was not till about two o'clock that the boy got a chance to tell him about his adventure with the bond. Mr. Glass was naturally astonished at the story, and agreed with Hal that it was very singular that the fellow Case appeared to be aware that he had a valuable package about him. Hal then told him that Will Chambers had noticed a man answering the sport's description in the office talking to the cashier at the time he (Hal) left on his errand, and that this person followed him out. Hal admitted that he hadn't taken any notice of the party himself.

"Let me have the rascal's description," said the broker.

Hal gave it to him and Mr. Glass wrote it down. Later on the broker called Will in and asked him to describe the man he saw talking with Gregory.

Will's description fitted very closely to Hal's,

and the broker was satisfied that the visitor to the office was the same man who had followed Hal to Newtown and robbed him of the bond, but owing to the young messenger's alertness had failed to get away with the goods.

He went into the counting-room and questioned the cashier about the man. Gregory was shrewd enough not to deny the conversation, but declared he had never seen the visitor before. He stated in general terms what had passed between them, and that was all that the broker could learn from him. Mr. Glass communicated the fact, and Case's description, to the police, and asked that an effort be made to arrest the fellow. If they made any effort in that direction nothing came of it. Some days afterward Hal noticed that M. & O. shares were going up. He knew that the stock was a gilt-edged one and decided to take a chance on it, so he purchased 200 shares at the market price of 105.

Next day it was up to 108. Hal thought of cashing in at that figure, as he had no line on the stock. He hesitated, however, as the chances looked good for a further rise. He held on a few days longer, and when it went up to 111 and a fraction, he sold out and cleared \$1,200. That made him worth \$3,800.

As he was leaving the office that afternoon, Mr. Glass handed him a letter and told him to carry it to one of their customers who lived in the Bronx.

"You had better not go up till early in the evening, as the gentleman might not be at home before then," said the broker.

"All right, sir; I'll deliver the letter after I've had my dinner," said Hal.

Accordingly Hal started for the Bronx on a Third avenue train about half-past seven, and three-quarters of an hour later was walking to the address on the envelope. Right ahead of him he noticed a man whose figure was somewhat familiar to him.

"I believe that's Titus Gregory," he muttered. "I wonder what brings him up here in the Bronx? Came up to see some friend, I suppose; or maybe he has a relative in the borough. Well, it's none of my business."

Hal was not far behind the man when he stopped under a gas lamp, and taking a slip of paper out of his pocket, examined it in the light. The boy now caught a clear view of his side face, and he no longer had any doubt of the individual's identity. He was certainly the cashier. Whether Gregory heard Hal's footsteps or not behind him he did not look around. Continuing up the street for two blocks, with the young messenger trailing on behind, he stopped before the gate of a rusty looking and dilapidated iron fence of some height which enclosed a three-story old-fashioned gambrel-roofed house and the grounds in the midst of which it stood. He tried the gate and found it locked. Perceiving the handle of a bell, he rang it with some vigor.

With his soft felt hat pulled down above his shaggy eyebrows, he stood waiting to be admitted, while Hal passed by on the outside of the curb.

Leaving the boy to pursue his way, he will follow the movements of Titus Gregory, whose ill-omened countenance wore a look that was not pleasant to see.

CHAPTER VI.—Titus Gregory and the Money-Lender.

An old female servant answered the cashier's ring.

"Well, sir?" she said, without unlocking the gate.

"I want to see Andrew Goodman," said Gregory. "He is in, I suppose?"

"What is your name and business?"

"My name is a matter of no importance, but my business is special."

"You are not one of his customers, I believe."

"No," replied Gregory; then he added, "I have called in that connection."

"Have you a letter of introduction, or a card?"

"I have not," said the cashier, impatiently.

"I will tell Mr. Goodman you wish to see him. I can't admit any visitors without his permission."

The old woman ambled away and nearly ten minutes passed before she came back.

Then she opened the gate and admitted Gregory, whose temper had not been improved by the delay. She led him into a poorly-lighted and somber-looking reception-room, pointed to a chair and went out by the door. In a few minutes she returned and bade him follow her. She took him into a small, dark-paneled room, fitted up with a desk, a ponderous safe, a bookcase full of books extending on two sides, several uncomfortable appearing stiff back chairs of antique pattern, and other furniture to match. The single window was hung with heavy, old-fashioned drapery descending from a heavy frame, and the apartment was lighted by a hanging Moorish lamp suspended above the desk.

"Be seated, sir," said Andrew Goodman, who sat in a dressing-gown and slippers at the desk, casting a keen look at his visitor. "And tell me your business."

Gregory instead of seating himself walked up to the side of the desk and gazed upon the money-lender, for such was Goodman's occupation.

"You don't seem to recollect me, Andrew Goodman," he said, in sibilant tones.

The old man, for his age was all of sixty-five, gazed into the face of his caller in some wonder, and as he looked the light of recognition gradually came into his eyes, while his pinched features grew deadly pale.

"Titus Gregory!" he exclaimed.

"Aye, Titus Gregory. Aren't you glad to see me?" with a wicked little laugh.

"How dare you call on me again? I thought you were dead."

"You heartily wished I was, no doubt; but I'm far from that. Traveling has improved me in every way but in the pocket."

"Has it made an honest man of a thief and scoundrel? If it has it has done wonders; but I doubt it. You have the same wicked eye I always noticed with aversion. Titus Gregory, you are the same man you always were, perhaps, if anything, worse. You can't deceive me, for I know you and can read you like a book."

"Complimentary as ever, my dear uncle," sneered the visitor.

"Don't call me uncle. The tie has been forever sundered by your rascally conduct. When I dis-

owned you my decision was final," cried Andrew Goodman, in louder tones.

"Then if I tell you that I've turned over a new leaf you won't believe me?"

"Turned over a new leaf—you!"

"Why not? A man may repent at the eleventh hour, the dominie says. I assure you I have become a respectable member of society. I am now the cashier of a well-known brokerage office in Wall Street. Perhaps you have heard of John Glass? You have dealings with many Wall Street people, though, I believe they are mostly of the lamb persuasion," with a satirical laugh. "That safe of yours, I dare say, is filled with notes of hand, and mortgages, the proceeds raised on which has found its way into the financial district—that insatiable maw which swallows the earnings of the clerk, the wages of the artisan, the coin of the borrower, the trust funds of the widow and orphan, and last, but not least, the pilferings of the embezzler."

"So you are the cashier of a stock broker's office? I congratulate you. You have at last turned your talents in the proper channel. Better late than never."

Gregory grinned in a mocking way.

"Thank you, my dear—I was going to say uncle, but you have barred the term," he said.

The old man regarded him grimly through his gold-rimmed spectacles.

"Now that you have intruded yourself on me, perhaps you will let me know the reason of your visit. It can't be money, for you must be in receipt of a salary sufficient to meet your wants. What is it, then?"

"You say it can't be money? That's exactly what it is."

"Indeed," replied Andrew Goodman, coldly. "You have come to the wrong place for it. You have long ago received your last dollar from me."

"Well, now, I have a different idea. Perhaps you'd like to buy some information?"

"What do you mean?"

"If I remember correctly, you were very anxious some years ago to discover the whereabouts of George Halman."

"Ha! Have you learned anything about him?"

"I have."

"Where is he?"

"There," said Gregory, pointing his index finger downward.

"I don't understand you."

"Down among the dead men."

"Dead!" exclaimed Andrew Goodman, with a change of countenance.

"Dead," repeated the cashier. "Curse him! He lived too long as it was."

"Poor fellow. You hated him because——"

"Because he stole Agnes Bassett away from me. Well, I ruined him, that's some satisfaction," said Gregory, vindictively.

"You ruined him!"

"I did; and I would do it again if the grave gave up its dead."

"You're an evil-hearted villain, Titus Gregory. I knew that you could not change for the better any more than a leopard can change his spots, or a tiger his stripes. The mark of a bad heart is on your face, that the world may read and avoid you."

"Thanks for the compliment," sneered the cashier.

"So poor George is dead? I feared it, when no effort on my part could bring me news of his whereabouts."

"I could have told you, but I wouldn't. He was your favorite nephew, while I——"

"Were always the black sheep of the family, and time, it seems, has made no impression on you for the better. What's bred in the bone will not come out."

"And I'm the son of one of your sisters."

"You are, and with shame I am forced to admit the fact; but you are no more like her than gold is like dross. You took after your father, who was a blackguard if there ever was one. He drove my sister to an early grave—a heartbroken, deceived woman. You are following in his footsteps. When he reached the end of his tether he put a bullet in his brain."

"A polite suggestion on your part that I ought to do the same, I suppose."

"The world wouldn't miss you if you did," replied the old man, coolly.

Gregory glared at his uncle in a way that boded him no good.

"If you know that George is dead," went on the money-lender, "perhaps you know where his wife is, and how she is getting on?"

"I do."

"Well?"

"She's got a grown son who is the picture of his father! I intend to ruin him, too, and then I'll be satisfied."

"Man—man, you wouldn't dare!" cried Andrew Goodman, excitedly.

"Wouldn't dare, eh?" and Gregory laughed wickedly.

"Are you a man or a fiend?"

"Both, perhaps."

"Is it not enough that, according to your own statement, you involved your cousin in ruin? Would you pursue your hatred further?"

"Ay, to the utmost limit," cried the cashier, fiercely. "I'll have my pound of flesh."

"Vengeance is mine, quoth the Lord. Beware, Titus Gregory."

"Bah! Keep your quotations to yourself. Do you want to save this boy from my vengeance? I will give you the chance if you do."

"Yes. You want money, I suppose. Well, you shall have it if you will give me some guarantee that you will keep your hands off the son of George Halman. You must also bring him here to this house, or at least furnish me with his address."

"Money—yes, that is part of my price; but only a part—the smallest part."

"What else do you demand? What can be of more importance to you than money?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No, I can't," replied the old man impatiently.

"Your ward. I want Vivian King for my wife."

"What!" roared Andrew Goodman, starting up in his chair, his wrinkled countenance ablaze with wrath. "You—you want Vivian—my Vivian, for your—never!"

"Don't get excited, my dear relative. It's bad for one of your years. You wanted to know my price. You have it—Vivian King and fifty thousand dollars down as an evidence of good faith on your part. That is my price to keep my hands off your grand-nephew. Think it over and let me know later. There is my employer's

business card. Send me word when you are ready to say yes, but let it be soon, for I have a scheme on the stocks that will do up the boy in short order unless you speedily come to terms."

"Scoundrel!" shouted the old man.

"Hard words break no bones," laughed Gregory.

"Oh, villain, villain! I know you are capable of doing what you say; but you will not. You dare not. After what you have done to the father, the Lord will surely protect his son against your machinations."

"If you think so then we'll let it go at that. Nevertheless, I'll do my best to win out, and as I possess certain advantages in the game I think I'll succeed."

"Oh, you rascal!" cried the old man, clasping his hands, feverishly, as he paced up and down the room.

Gregory watched him with a malicious satisfaction. At length Andrew Goodman stopped before him.

"Bring George Halman's son here and I will give you \$50,000 in money," he said, earnestly.

"Is not that temptation enough for you? You never can have my Vivian. Why should you want her? She was a child when you saw her last."

"And now she is almost a woman," said Gregory, a flush forcing its way out on his dark skin. "The loveliest girl that breathes in all New York."

"How know you that? You haven't seen her since——"

"That shows how little you know of what is transpiring around you. You are like a bloated old spider, who sits crouched all day long in the depths of his web, waiting for the flies—in your case the borrowers—to come into his quarters, that he may fatten on their bodies as you fatten on the per cent. paid you for accommodating them with a little money advanced on gilt-edged security. I have met your ward, the lovely Vivian King, on the outside, and I am one of her most devoted admirers. I lost Agnes Bassett, and the loss made me the man I am. Well, I can be saved, even with all my sins on my head, by Vivian King. For her sake I will become a better man. For her sake I will do anything. She will be my good angel. She will lead me back to the road I would have trodden had I won Agnes. Give her to me and I swear to——"

"You would swear to anything, Titus Gregory, to gain your point, but your oath, like your word, is not worth that," and the money-lender snapped his fingers.

"Say you so?" cried the cashier, his rage mastering him, "then let me tell you that I will marry Vivian King in spite of you, or I will bring ruin on your head despite your present wealth."

As Andrew Goodman was about to make a stinging reply, there came a gentle knock on the door. Then a girl of seventeen, with bright chestnut hair, blue eyes, a creamy complexion, with a slender but well-molded figure, and an expression of tenderness which cast a halo of loveliness over her features, entered the room.

This was Vivian King. She drew back timidly on seeing the cashier, and then recognized him with a modest little bow. Gregory's rage vanished in an instant, and the nearest approach to an amiable look he was capable of spread over his features.

"I am delighted to see you, Miss King," he said, with a low bow.

The money-lender frowned ominously.

"Shut the door, Vivian," he said in a calm tone.

"You have met this man before, I believe?"

"Yes, guardy," replied the girl, in a sweet tone.

"Do you know who he is?"

"Why, yes; he is Mr. Gregory."

"But you don't know that he is my—nephew."

The word seemed to choke the money-lender.

"Your nephew!" exclaimed the girl in surprise.

"Yes, my nephew, and, I regret to say, a scoundrel of the worst type."

Vivian looked from Gregory to her uncle in an embarrassed, frightened way.

The cashier grew livid with anger at this cool exposure before the creature he fairly worshiped.

"My words surprise you, I know," went on the old man; "but the truth must be spoken. He is a serpent in the guise of a man. By his own admission he compassed the ruin of his cousin, George Halman, of whom you have often heard me speak. He now proposes to ruin the son of Halman, who is dead, that the measure of his hate may be filled to the brim. He has his price, however, like all rascals. He is willing to forego the second part of his vengeance if I will pay him a certain sum of money and consent to you becoming his wife. Will you marry such a man?"

"Guardy!" cried the embarrassed Vivian, blushing vividly.

Titus Gregory was furious at the exposure before the girl.

"You shall pay for this, Andrew Goodman," he hissed, "and pay dearly."

"Titus Gregory," cried the money-lender, drawing the girl to his side and putting one arm protectingly around her, "do your worst. You have your answer. Sooner than my little girl should marry you, I'd see her dead in her coffin. You are a scoundrel, without one redeeming quality. Go—leave my house and never let me see you again!"

"So that is your ultimatum, is it?" gritted the cashier.

"Yes. Go. Do your worst. I defy you!"

"By heaven! I accept your challenge. You have ruined me in the estimation of the only being on earth I care for. Henceforth I live but for vengeance, and the first blow shall fall on you."

He drew a revolver from his pocket and aimed it at the old man.

"What, would you murder me?" cried Andrew Goodman, aghast, as with a scream the girl tried to shield his body with her own.

"Aye, for I hate you as never man hated before," hissed Gregory, his face aflame.

With these words he pulled the trigger.

CHAPTER VII.—Revelations That Surprised Hal.

Hal Halman found the house of the gentleman for whom he brought the note without difficulty, delivered it and started on his return.

He went back the same way he came. This took him by the house with the iron fence, at the gate of which he had left Titus Gregory standing. As he had seen the cashier pull the bell he judged that he had entered the house, and was probably there at that moment.

Hal wondered who the people were Gregory was calling on, little dreaming that this was the home of his dead father's uncle, of whom he had heard his mother speak at rare intervals. Nor did he dream that that old man was ready to pay thousands of dollars for a reliable clue to his whereabouts. George Halman, his father, had gone West to California immediately after his marriage, and there in the city of Oakland Hal was born.

There Titus Gregory had followed them, and, without disclosing his presence to his cousin, had managed to ruin him within a short time. Six months since Hal and his mother came to New York from Oakland, and the boy got work in Broker Glass' office.

Prior to that he had worked for a California street broker in San Francisco for something over a year, so he was not new to the business. A week after Hal entered Wall Street, Gregory became cashier of the office, and from the moment he learned the boy's identity he began to make things unpleasant for him in one way or another.

Hal was abreast of the gate when he heard a pistol shot coming from the house. The sound was muffled, and he might have paid no attention to it but that it was at once followed by a shrill, girlish scream.

"My gracious! What does that mean?" he exclaimed.

He rushed to the gate and looked through the iron pickets. In a minute or two the front door was pulled open and a man came hurriedly out. Hal saw him stop for an instant and shake his clenched fist at the house. Then he came toward the gate at a rapid walk. Hal recognized the person as Gregory. The cashier turned aside when close to the gate and began to climb the iron fence. As he dropped over on the sidewalk Hal grabbed his arm.

"What's the trouble in the house, Mr. Gregory?" he asked.

The rascal turned with a start and an imprecation. Then he identified Hal.

"You here?" he hissed.

"Yes, sir. I was passing when I heard what I fancied was a pistol shot and then a girl's scream."

"What brings you up this way?" gritted the cashier, gripping Hal savagely by the arm. "Do you know who lives here?"

"I do not. I have just carried a letter from Mr. Glass to Mr. Davis, three blocks above, and was returning to the station to go home."

Gregory glared at him.

"Come along," he said, attempting to drag Hal along.

At that juncture an upper window in the house was thrown up and the old woman who had admitted Gregory to the place cried out: "Help! Murder!"

"There's something wrong in that house," said Hal, wrenching his arm free. "What is it? You just came from there."

"Will you come with me, boy?" hissed the cashier.

"No," replied Hal, regarding him now with suspicion.

Gregory made a sudden rush at him, struck him down with his fist, and then hurried off down the street.

"Murder! Murder! Help!" cried the woman.

"By George, there is something wrong," cried Hal, getting on his feet, "and I'm going to see what it is."

He scaled the fence with the agility of a monkey, and ran toward the house.

"What's the matter?" he asked the woman.

"Go for the police. There has been murder committed," she replied in agitated tones.

"Murder!" gasped Hal. "Oh, lord!"

He ran back to the fence in time to see a policeman coming up who had heard the woman's scream.

"What's the trouble?" asked the officer, looking through the pickets.

"The woman who was at the window just now said murder had been committed in the house, and asked me to run for the police," replied Hal.

"Let me in, then."

"I can't. The gate is locked and the key is not in it. You'll have to climb the fence the same as I did."

"Can't you get the key?" said the policeman, who did not relish the idea of scaling the fence if he could avoid it.

"I'll ring the bell and ask for it," said Hal, starting back for the house.

"In answer to his ring the old woman, pale and trembling, came to the door.

"There's a policeman at the gate. Where is the key?"

The woman fumbled in her pocket and brought the key out.

"Here it is. Lock the door after him and bring back the key," she said.

Hal took it and admitted the officer. The boy then followed him into the house.

"Mr. Goodman has been shot by a visitor he had," said the woman. "He is in his office with his ward, Miss Vivian."

"Is he dead?" asked the policeman.

"No, but he's in a bad way."

"Is there a doctor near by?"

"Yes, in the next block below, on the other side."

"Go and fetch him," said the officer to Hal.

The young messenger hastened away. He found the physician in, told him what had happened, and asked him to accompany him to the house. The doctor caught up some instruments and his bag and went with Hal. They were admitted to the office room where the money-lender was lying on a leather-upholstered lounge. His eyes were closed and he was breathing heavily. The officer had just closed his note-book after putting down the brief particulars he had extracted from Vivian King. After an examination the doctor said that the old man was seriously, but not dangerously hurt by the bullet, which he soon extracted.

"With proper care, if no complication sets in, he will get well," he said.

Tears of joy shone in the girl's eyes at this announcement.

"Poor, dear guardy. He shall have every care," she said.

The doctor, after binding up the money-lender's wound, left a prescription and said there was nothing else he could do, but he would call in the morning.

"I will go to the drug store for you, miss," said Hal.

"Thank you. It is so good of you to offer to do so. Here is a dollar. First you and the policeman had better take Mr. Goodman to his room and put him to bed. I will show you the way," she said.

This job was accomplished, and then the policeman accompanied Hal to the street.

"I must go to the station and make my report," he said. "A detective will be sent out at once to look up that rascal who did the shooting."

"Who was he? Did you learn his identity?" asked Hal.

"Yes. His name is Titus Gregory, and he's the old man's nephew."

"His nephew!" exclaimed the boy in some surprise.

"So the young lady told me."

"And he did the shooting?"

"Yes. It appears so."

"What a rascal he is. Why, he's the cashier of the office where I work."

"He is? Where do you work?"

"In Wall Street, at John Glass' office. He's a stock-broker."

"What's the number?" asked the policeman, pausing under the next lamp-post to make the additional entries in his book.

Hal told him. The policeman then went on his way while Hal entered the drugstore to have the prescription filled. In a short time he was back at the house again and was met at the door by Vivian King, whom Hal thought the sweetest girl he had ever met.

"Thank you ever so much for the trouble you have taken to get the medicine," she said softly. "You are so kind."

"No trouble whatever, Miss King," replied Hal, with a smile. "I am happy to be of service to you."

"Thank you for saying so. I am very grateful to you, and I am sure my guardian will appreciate it when I tell him."

"It will surprise you to learn that Titus Gregory, the man you say shot Mr. Goodman, is the cashier of our office."

"You don't mean it," she cried.

"I do. I met him in front of the house when he jumped the fence just after I heard a muffled pistol shot and a scream."

"You did?"

"Yes. He asked me what I was doing in this neighborhood, and tried to drag me away with him."

"Is it possible?"

Hal told her the reason why he had come up in the Bronx, and also mentioned how he had seen Gregory stop at the gate and ring for admission.

"You haven't told me your name," she said at last.

"Hal Halman."

"Halman!" she exclaimed, in some surprise. "Mr. Goodman had a nephew named Halman—George Halman."

"My father's name was George, and now that you mention it, I think I've heard my mother speak of a Mr. Andrew Goodman, to whom my father was related. It surely can't be that your guardian is the same man?"

"I don't know," said Vivian, looking at Hal with a fresh interest. "I will ask him when he is better. You must leave me your address so he can

communicate with you in case it is true that your father was his nephew."

"I will do so, of course, but it scarcely seems possible there is any connection. Mother and I have only been in New York about seven months. We came from Oakland, California, where I was born."

"California! Why that is where George Halman went soon after he married."

"Is that so?" asked Hal, looking surprised and interested. "So did my father. He went to California nearly twenty years ago."

"It was about twenty years ago that Mr. Goodman's nephew went out there. Do you know I believe you are his son. And yet it is singular, if you are, that your father has not called to see Mr. Goodman since his return. He was my guardian's favorite nephew, and Mr. Goodman thinks a great deal of him."

"My father is dead, Miss King. He died a year after he took up his home in the Golden State."

"Dear me. That probably accounts for his long silence, which Mr. Goodman has wondered at. If you are George Halman's son, my guardian will be more than happy to see you. I think you had better call in a few days and see Mr. Goodman. By the way, was your mother's name before her marriage Agnes Bassett?"

"Yes."

"Then you are my guardian's grand-nephew. How pleased Mr. Goodman will be when I tell him," cried the girl, her eyes lighting up. "How singular this meeting has been! Just to think that you should come here at such a time. It must be that Fate has a hand in it."

"It looks that way. My mother will be astonished when I tell her."

"You had better bring your mother with you when you come; and do come soon, won't you? Mr. Goodman will be impatient and eager to welcome you both."

"Very well, Miss King, I will do as you say. I guess there can be no doubt that we are related to Mr. Goodman."

"I am sure of it."

"Is it true that Titus Gregory is my dead father's cousin?" asked Hal, with a displeased look.

"It is true, unfortunately, for he appears to be a bad man."

"He certainly is a rascal. I have had evidence of that before to-night. Maybe he was on unfriendly terms with my father, and recognizing me as his second cousin, has tried to get square through me. He has made a dead set at me from the day he came into the office, and I never could understand why he got down on me."

"It may be so, but Mr. Goodman never mentioned Mr. Gregory's name to me. I did not know that Mr. Gregory, whom I met twice until to-night, just before the shooting, when Mr. Goodman disclosed the fact to me in his relative's presence, and then denounced him as a rascal. It was the exposure of this character before me that caused Mr. Gregory to draw his pistol and shoot my guardian."

Hal was more surprised at this revelation, though he was not particularly astonished at the cashier's rash act. He believed the man was capable of any piece of villainy, and was greatly

disgusted to know that the scoundrel was his own second cousin. He was now satisfied that this bond of relationship, slight as it was, was the cause of Gregory's hostility toward him. However, he began to feel a sense of satisfaction in the knowledge that Gregory's career at the office was probably wound up, since with the police on his track to arrest him for his dastardly act, he was not likely to show up at the office any more, and the result would be a new cashier.

After some further talk with Vivian, with whom he was greatly struck, and whose acquaintance he was sure he would be glad to follow up, he took his leave and started for home, his brain in a tumult over the revelations that night had brought to him.

CHAPTER VIII.—Hal Finds Himself Solid With Mr. Goodman.

Hal's mother was greatly astonished by the story her son told her on his return home that evening. She remembered having been introduced to Andrew Goodman before her marriage by her prospective husband. Mr. Goodman then lived in Brooklyn and was a produce broker. He was a man of about forty-five at that time. She had never spoken to Hal about Titus Gregory, who had wooed her at the same time that George Halman did. Gregory, even when turned down by her, had given her no intimation of what his feelings were on the subject, nor of his vengeful intentions toward his cousin, the successful winner of the prize he coveted.

Whatever he did, he did in the dark, by underhand methods. When Hal told her about the way the new cashier, whose name was Gregory, was treating him, he did not mention his first name, and so his mother did not associate this man with her disappointed suitor, whom she had not seen or heard from for over twenty years. Now, however, her eyes were opened when Hal related the events of the evening.

"Then you did not suspect that the cashier of our office, whom I told you was treating me so shabbily, was Titus Gregory, my father's cousin?" said Hal, who was not yet aware that the rascal was once an ardent suitor for his mother's hand.

"No. You never told me his first name. There are many Gregories in the world, and I have long supposed that Titus was dead," she replied.

"When he has been tried for attempted crime of this night, if Mr. Goodman pushes the case against him he'll be dead to the world for some time, I guess."

They talked for a long time about the new aspect of affairs, and Mrs. Halman agreed to visit Mr. Goodman with her son when he was ready to call on the gentleman.

"How are you sagatiating this morning, Hal?" asked Will when the hero of this story made his appearance at the office about his usual time next day.

"I'm feeling all right. I've got news for you," replied Hal.

"Have you? Tell us."

"We are more than likely to have a new cashier."

"The dickens you say," cried Will, astonished, "How do you know?"

"Because if Mr. Gregory is not already in the Tombs he'll be there soon."

"What in creation has he done to entitle him to that honor?"

"Shot a man."

"Go on, you're kidding me."

"No; what I'm telling you is straight goods."

"I didn't see anything in the paper about it."

"Neither did I, which is proof that the papers don't get hold of everything that happens within the radius of Greater New York."

"Who did he shoot, and why did he shoot him? How did you find it out?"

"I think I'd better tell you the whole story. The shooting took place in an old house on — street, in the Bronx, last evening between eight and nine. I was in front of the place, on my way home after carrying a note to one of our customers who lives on the same street, when the thing happened."

Hal then went on to relate, in as few words as possible, all the reader knows about the occurrence, so far as as the young messenger was connected with it. Will, of course, was astonished.

"I guess that settles his job here," he said. "You ought to be glad."

"I am. I hope I'll never see him again."

Hal did not tell Will what he had learned about the rascal's relationship to him. He was thoroughly ashamed of the connection. The clerks came in and waited for the cashier to show up so they could get to work, but he didn't appear, and they hung around their desks chinning together.

Mr. Glass came down about half-past nine, and was surprised to learn that Gregory was not on hand. Hal took it on himself to tell him that, and then explained the reason, giving over the same story he had told Will. Naturally the broker was astonished as well as displeased. He opened up the big safe himself and put the clerks to work. Then he put the second book-keeper in charge of the office. After attending to his correspondence he went to the Exchange. The early afternoon papers had the story of the shooting of Andrew Goodman by Titus Gregory, whose relationship to the wounded man was given. The facts were rather meager, though several reporters had interviewed Vivian King early in the morning. When the papers went to press Gregory had not yet been arrested. Before he went home Hal wrote a note to Vivian inquiring about Mr. Goodman's condition, which the papers stated to be favorable, and telling her that he and his mother would call whenever he got word from her that her guardian was able to see them. He mailed the note on his way to the Sixth Avenue Elevated road. Next morning Mr. Glass announced that the second book-keeper would hereafter be cashier, and a promotion was made to fill the post of second book-keeper.

As business was not very brisk, the broker deferred making any other changes for the present. Just as Hal was leaving for the day the postman delivered a letter addressed to him in a female hand, and that fact, coupled with the postmark, showed the boy that the letter came from Miss King. She acknowledged receipt of Hal's note, said her guardian was getting on very nicely, and asked him to come up with his mother that evening if he could, as she had told Mr.

Goodman about his identity, and he was very anxious to see him.

So after supper that evening Hal and his mother went up to the Goodman house. Hal rang the gate bell and the old woman let them in without question. They were ushered into the parlor. Vivian appeared in a few minutes and gave Hal a warm greeting. Hal introduced his mother, and then the girl took them both upstairs to Mr. Goodman's bedroom.

"Guardy, this is Hal Halman, son of George Halman, your nephew," said Vivian.

Hal approached the bed and took the old man's hand. The money-lender did not speak at first, but gazed earnestly into the lad's frank and open countenance.

"Yes," he said, "you are indeed my grand-nephew, for you have your father's features. Welcome to my home, my dear boy. For years I have longed to see your father again, but now I know that can never be, for Vivian tells me he is dead—that he died many years ago in California, where he went to live with his bride."

"Yes, sir; and here is my mother, whom you once met as Agnes Bassett, but so long ago that doubtless you cannot recall her face," said Hal.

"Welcome, my dear," said Mr. Goodman. "As the widow of my nephew you will ever become welcome in this house."

The old man asked many questions of Mrs. Halman about her husband's brief career in California. She told him that her husband had started on a good business in Oakland, but that though it prospered at first it proved a disastrous failure inside of the year owing to circumstances which her husband never divulged to her.

"Your husband was deliberately ruined by a relentless enemy," said Mr. Goodman.

Mrs. Halman looked startled.

"That enemy was George's cousin, Titus Gregory, who hated him because he had won you for his wife. And you never suspected this?"

"Never," replied Mrs. Halman.

"It is the truth, for the rascal himself told me last night before he shot me that he followed his cousin to California in order to ruin him out of revenge."

"He's a greater villain than I ever dreamed he was," said Hal.

"He is worse even than you have any idea," said the old man. "I trust he will be found by the police and put behind the bars."

"You will prosecute him, I suppose?"

"I will, for I have a greater motive even than the injury he inflicted on me. He is a shrewd, designing villain, but he made a fatal mistake when he attacked me. Were the wound twice as bad I would welcome it, as it has resulted in bringing you to my house. It was my intention that my Vivian, who is the dearest little girl in the world, although no relation whatever to me, should inherit all my property; but now that you have turned up, I think she will not object to sharing it with you."

Judging from the way the girl took that announcement she evidently had not the slightest objection to the arrangement. Indeed, there was not a selfish drop of blood in Vivian King's body. Had her guardian said he intended to give the bulk of his property to Hal she would not have

murmured against his decision. Hal and his mother stayed as long as they thought was good for the old man, and then took their leave, promising to call again before long. The days passed away and Mr. Goodman recovered from the effects of his wound. He truly believed that Vivian had saved his life by shielding the most vital parts of his body with her own. Hal called frequently until he got on his feet again and resumed business. Perhaps the presence of Vivian had as much as anything to do with his visits, for to see and converse with her was to learn to love her, she was such a sweet and gentle creature, with none of the wiles of the world about her. The old man had raised her like a choice plant in the conservatory of his home, and she had bloomed into a girl of unusual loveliness. Small wonder if Hal was over head and ears in love with her.

CHAPTER IX.—The Burglars.

One day, a few weeks later, Hal carried a message to a broker in the Vanderpool Building in Exchange Place.

"I want to see Mr. Kirkman," he said to the office boy.

"He is engaged with a visitor. Take a seat," replied the youth.

"Well, you can take this note into him, can't you?" said Hal.

"All right," said the boy, taking the envelope and knocking at the door of the private office.

He was told to come in. In a few moments he returned.

"He will have an answer for you in a few minutes," said the boy to Hal.

Hal nodded and walked to the partly open window to look out. While he stood there he heard a part of the conversation going on in the private room, for the window of that office was also partly open.

"I think that's all, Kirkman," said a voice. "Get on the job at once and buy every share of L. & N. you can find. Keep me posted and I'll tell you when to stop. Understand?"

"Certainly, Mr. Price," replied the broker.

"All right. There is nothing further, so I'll get over to my office," said Price, who Hal believed was the millionaire operator of that name.

He was certain a moment later when he saw the gentleman come out and go away.

"I guess I've got hold of a bang-up tip," thought the young messenger. "Mr. Price wouldn't give that order unless he meant business. Evidently some syndicate, of which he is the head, is going to try and corner that stock with the view of booming it, and afterwards unloading on the lambs. I must get in on the ground floor with the insiders, and hold on till I judge they are getting out from under. If I work the trick all right I shall make another good haul, and probably double my capital."

At that point in his reflections the boy brought him the answer from the broker, and he started back for the office. When he got off that afternoon he went to the little bank and ordered 350 shares of L. & N. bought for his account at the market, the 92.

That evening Hal went up to Andrew Good-

man's house, where he was welcome at all times, to call on Vivian. The old man was pretty shrewd, as befitted one in the money-lending business, and he saw with half an eye, as the saying is, that Hal was greatly taken with his ward. He chuckled to himself as if such a thing had pleased him greatly. Hal had already won his way into the money-lender's heart, which was inclined toward him from the start.

Mr. Goodman saw that the young messenger was a fine young fellow in every way. He had not acquired any of the small vices of youth, and he gave every promise of turning out to be a true and upright man, as well as a smart one. That was the kind of person Mr. Goodman considered a worthy mate for his little girl, as he affectionately called her. As he had just added a codicil to his will dividing his possessions at his death equally between Hal and Vivian, he figured that nothing would suit him better than to have made a match. As Vivian received Hal's visits with pleasure the old man had great hopes that things would turn out to his satisfaction.

There was an alley running up on one side of the grounds to and beyond a small gate where tradesmen's clerks were admitted by ringing a bell. To save the old woman, or the gardener and general helper, the trouble of going to the front gate to admit Hal when he called, the boy was intrusted with a key to the side gate so he could admit himself to the grounds. On this evening Hal entered the alley as usual and walked forward in the darkness. Two men, one of whom was in the act of hoisting the other to the top of the fence, heard his approach.

They immediately crouched down close by and waited to see who the newcomer was, and what business he had in the alley. Never dreaming of their presence, Hal took out the key and unlocked the gate. He was about to pass in when one of the men glided forward and struck him a blow on the head with a slung-shot. Fortunately, owing to the darkness, the blow was only a glancing one.

Nevertheless it was enough to put Hal out of business for the time being. He dropped senseless in his tracks and lay still.

"I've fixed him," said a voice that sounded like Titus Gregory's. "He must be a new servant the old man has hired, otherwise he wouldn't have a key to this gate. Drag him out of the way, Gabe, and then we'll walk in and attend to our business. Goodman little thinks I am so near him. Neither have the police any idea that I am in the city. I have sworn to get square with the old dotard, and this night I shall strike my first blow."

The speaker's companion was Gabe Case, the sporty chap whom the police of both New York and Jersey City had hunted for in vain after the bond affair, seized hold of Hal and pulled him out into the alley. The two men then entered the grounds and closed the gate after them.

Gregory looked through the window of Mr. Goodman's office. The Moorish lamp burned low above the closed desk, and there was no sign of the money-lender in the room. It happened that Mr. Goodman had gone to visit a client who could not very well call at his house. The rascals had seen him leave the house, and had congratulated themselves that the coast was clear. They did

not fear interference on the part of the old gardener, nor the two females in the house.

A jimmy in the hands of the expert Gabe Case was soon at work on the window of the office, and it didn't take that individual long to get the window open without making much noise. The two rascals then entered the room. Gregory tried the door leading into the hall and found it was not fastened. He listened for some sound that would indicate the whereabouts of Vivian and the old woman. Hearing nothing he judged that the girl was either in the sitting-room or in her own apartment, and that the housekeeper was in her room on the third floor.

"All serene," he said, locking the door. "Do you think you can do anything with that safe?"

"Yes, but it'll take time," replied Case, who had brought a small bag of tools with him.

"How much time?"

"Maybe two hours. There's quite some drilling to be done."

"I'm afraid the old man will be back before the two hours are over. We'll have to let the safe go and help ourselves to what's in his desk and around the room. Just jimmy that desk, and while I'm looking it over you can fill your bag with whatever you think is worth carrying off. Then we'll fire the house and make off."

The sport got the desk open in short order and Gregory began running over the documents he saw in it. He did not expect to find any money, but his object was to do as much injury as possible to his uncle's business. While the men were busy in the room a face appeared at the partly open window. It was the countenance of Hal Halman. He had recovered from the shock of the blow and entered the grounds through the gate, which he found unlocked. He reasoned that he had been attacked by one or more men who had been hanging around the place for no good purpose. He believed that the rascals had entered the grounds through the gate he had unlocked after knocking him out. It behooved him, then, to be cautious in his movements, and instead of ringing the front door-bell, as he would have done but for the unexpected turn of events, to investigate the premises and see if anything crooked was going on. Walking to the back of the house, as the most likely place to make such a discovery, the first thing he did was to look into Mr. Goodman's office.

There he saw the two men—one at the desk and the other gliding around the room in a stealthy way. It was a great surprise to him to recognize Gregory as the man at the desk. He had supposed that the ex-cashier was a long distance from New York. The other chap he had no difficulty in identifying as Gabe Case. Clearly they were the persons who had temporarily done him up at the gate. Now they were in the house in the role of burglars. Well, how was he going to circumvent them? He had no idea where he would find a policeman if he went looking for one. The time he was lost thereby would be made good use of by the two rascals. It was not unlikely they would get away with their plunder. Yet he could hardly tackle them successfully alone. Whatever he did he ought to do quickly. Looking around he saw a dim light shining from the upper window of the carriage-house which

stood at the back of the property. He remembered that the old gardener had his quarters there.

"I'll go over and get him to help me tackle these chaps," thought Hal.

He acted on the idea at once. There was a side door which opened on the stairway leading up to the rooms above the floor where the carriage and two horses were kept. This was locked, but there was a bell which Hal pulled. In a minute or two he heard steps of the old man coming down the stairs. The door opened and the gardener stood there in his shirt sleeves. He did not immediately recognize Hal, whom he had only seen two or three times.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"I am Hal Halman; don't you know me?"

"Yes, I do now."

"Have you a revolver in your room?"

"A revolver!" exclaimed the old man in surprise.

"Yes. There are two rascals in Mr. Goodman's office rifling the room. I just discovered them there. We want to put a stop to their operations and capture them if we can."

The gardener uttered an exclamation of consternation.

"I know both of the scoundrels," went on the boy. "They are wanted by the police for crimes they have already committed. I might as well tell you that one is Mr. Goodman's nephew, Titus Gregory, who shot the old gentleman a few weeks ago."

"My goodness!"

"Get your revolver, if you have one, and let me have it. Also fetch something that will answer for a club."

The gardener said he had a weapon and would bring it down. He went back upstairs for it, and presently it was in Hal's hands. It was a heavy six-shooter of the navy pattern, and a formidable looking weapon. The gardener then opened the door of the carriage-house and brought out a pitchfork, which he threw over his shoulder. The two men approached the house.

CHAPTER X.—Hal Balks the Burglars.

Titus Gregory was still seated at the desk with a pile of papers before him which he was tying up to take away for future examination at his leisure. Gabe Case had filled a suitcase he found in a closet with the choicest portable treasures of the room, of which the old money-lender had many which he prized for their rarity more than their intrinsic value, which was considerable. Hal and the gardener caught a good view of them through the window.

"I have a key to the kitchen door," said the latter. "We will enter that way and then we can come unexpectedly on them."

He opened the door and led Hal inside. Then they passed into a wide entry which divided the ground floor in half. The kitchen, pantry and dining-room were on one side, the office and parlor were on the other. A capacious cellar ran under both. They crossed the entry with great caution, and Hal laid his hand on the door of the office. He found to his disappointment that it was locked on the inside.

"They have locked themselves in to prevent interruption and sudden discovery," whispered the boy. "You had better stand guard here with the pitchfork, while I will go back and stand them up at the window."

The gardener agreed to that and Hal left him. When Hal looked in at the window again the suitcase and the bundle of papers stood on a chair within his reach. The rascals had placed them there in readiness to grab them up the moment they started to beat their retreat. Having accomplished part of their purpose they were both now preparing to finish the business. They were piling a mass of crumpled-up paper and light drawers from which they had emptied the contents on the floor against the wainscoted wall near the door. Their object was evident. They intended to set fire to the room, trusting that the blaze would obtain sufficient headway to ultimately destroy the house.

"The infernal scoundrels!" breathed Hay. "Gregory knows there are two women upstairs whose escape might be cut off before they were aware of their peril."

The window was now all the way up so that the rascals could quickly make their exit. They were so busy that they did not notice the boy reach in and remove both the package of papers and the suitcase. Having accomplished that, he brought matters to an immediate issue.

"Hands up, you scoundrels, or I'll shoot you down without mercy," he shouted.

Gregory and Case turned around and cast a startled look at the window. There they saw the head and shoulders of a boy, whom they did not recognize in the gloom, and the dim outline of a pointed revolver. They started back in consternation, and for the moment did not know what to do.

"Hands up, I say!" cried Hal again.

Gregory, however, was a crafty rascal, and never more so than when driven into a corner. As Case threw up his hands in a panic, he threw up one, while the other sought his hip pocket. Quick as a flash, taking his life in his hands, he flashed out his revolver and fired at Hal. The ball tore a splinter out of the window sill and bounded over the boy's shoulder past his ear.

Hal was rattled and he fired blindly, missing his mark. Gregory fired again, but the smoke of Hal's discharge prevented him from taking accurate aim, and Hal stood unharmed. Case took advantage of the shooting to make an attempt to escape. Dashing for the door, he unlocked it and rushed outside, only to be held up by the pronged pitchfork in the hands of the plucky old gardener. The firing had, of course, attracted the attention of the women upstairs, and greatly alarmed them.

Vivian, from her chair in the sitting-room on the floor above, located the reports as coming from her guardian's office.

She immediately jumped to the conclusion that Mr. Goodman had returned home, and was now being murdered by somebody—perhaps his rascally nephew, whom the police had not captured. With her heart in her mouth, and pale as death, for she loved the old man as much as if he were her father, she started for the stairs just as Hal fired again, winging Gregory's right arm, and

causing him to drop his weapon. With a cry of rage and pain the ex-cashier, who had already recognized Hal by the light of the lamp and the flashes of the revolvers, hurled a volley of imprecations at him and then dashed for the open door himself.

Hal fired at his retreating figure, but missed him. The boy then sprang into the room and started to follow Gregory. That rascal had found his companion struggling with the gardener after receiving a slight wound from one of the tines of the fork. He jumped in and laid the old man out on the floor, then the rascally pair ran for the front door. Here they were blocked until Gregory could unlock it. Hal coming on the scene quickly would have had them cornered only he tripped over the gardener's legs and measured his length on the floor, his revolver flying out of his hand.

Before he recovered his weapon and grasped the situation the rascals had made their exit, and were flying down the path to the front fence. Hal rushed to the door and sent a bullet after each of their scurrying figures but missed them.

They clambered over the iron fence with the quickness of desperation and flew down the street. Hal went back and helped the dazed gardener to his feet. While doing this Vivian, who had paused in fear on the stairs, falteringly asked who was there.

"The gardener and I, Miss Vivian," replied Hal. "Don't be afraid, the trouble is over."

"But guardy, is he——"

"Mr. Goodman has not returned home yet," answered Hal, who had learned from the gardener that the money-lender was out on a business visit.

"Thank Heaven!" murmured the girl. "He is safe then. What was the shooting about? Who were those men in the house? When did you come, Hal?"

"I'll tell you all in a few minutes, Miss Vivian. Wait till we straighten things up in the office which those chaps turned upside down. Come down and secure the front door."

At that moment there was a ring at the gate bell.

"There's guardy now," cried the girl running down, out of the door and toward the gate.

She was mistaken, however, for the person at the gate was a stalwart policeman who had been draw thither by the last two shots fired by Hal.

Hal and the gardener re-entered the office, and the boy pointed to the pile of paper and other material that the rascals intended to use for firing the house.

"What do you think of that for rascality?" said Hal.

"They ought to be strung up," said the man.

"They'll have to be caught first. Now that the rascals are back in the city I hope the police will exert themselves. Mr. Goodman and his home are not safe while they're at large."

Hal told him that there was a suitcase full of plunder outside the window, and a small bundle of what seemed like papers.

"I took charge of them before I tackled the chaps. I had them dead, at least I thought so, but Gregory pulled his gun on me so quickly that he had me guessing before I know where I was. It makes me feel like thirty cents to know that they got away from me when I might easily have shot either, or both, at first," said Hal.

He got out of the window and was handing in the package and the suitcase when Vivian appeared with the officer. She gasped when she saw the state the office was in.

"Who did the shooting?" asked the policeman.

"I did the greater part of it," admitted Hal, "and I regret to say I did very little damage. I winged one of the chaps on the arm and made him drop that weapon you see on the floor, but I guess I didn't hurt him much."

"Who were the men—burglars?"

"The chief rascal was the man who shot Mr. Goodman a few weeks ago—his nephew, Titus Gregory."

"Oh!" cried Vivian, who had feared as much.

"Tell me all you know about this affair. Where did the men go?" asked the policeman.

"After scaling the fence they ran down the street," replied Hal.

He then told the story of all that had happened. He had just concluded when the gate bell rang again and Vivian answered it. She returned with Mr. Goodman.

He, too, was astonished over the condition of his office, and wanted to know what it all meant. The presence of the policeman indicated that something serious had happened. Hal quickly put him in possession of the facts.

The old man was staggered to learn that one of the villains was his nephew, Titus Gregory. Clearly he had much to fear from the scoundrel. He told the officer that a strong effort must be made by the police to catch Gregory, for he was a very dangerous man. The policeman replied that when he had made his report at the police station detectives would undoubtedly be sent out to look for the two men. As soon as he departed, Hal and the gardener helped Mr. Goodman restore order in his office, while Vivian replaced the articles emptied out of the suitcase in their proper places.

The old man thanked Hal for saving his property, and praised his pluck. He said he intended to offer a reward for his nephew's capture if the police failed to catch him in a reasonable time.

When he was caught he would leave no stone unturned to get him a long sentence for his two crimes. Hal and Vivian enjoyed an hour's tete-a-tete before he got up to go.

"Maybe I'll call Sunday evening to make up for the time we've lost to-night," he said; "that is if you wish me to."

"I shall be very glad to see you if you come," she said, dropping her eyes. "You know you are always welcome here."

"Yes, that is what Mr. Goodman said, but as I am calling on you chiefly, perhaps I may wear my welcome out with you."

"Why should you think so?" she asked, with a blush.

"Perhaps you may not care to see me so often."

"Have I given you any reason for thinking so?"

"No."

"Then you mustn't have any such idea. I am pleased to see you no matter how often you call."

"Thank you, Vivian, for that assurance. You'll let me call you Vivian, for it seems formal to address you as Miss."

"You may do so. Do I not call you Hal?" she said with a smile and a blush.

"You do. I hope we shall always be Hal and

Vivian to each other. Now I will wish you good-night."

With those words he took his leave.

CHAPTER XI.—A Sharp Trick.

The attempted burglary and arson at Mr. Goodman's house was duly chronicled in all the morning papers, and Hal Halman's name appeared in connection with it as the person who had balked the rascals. Will read about it on his way to the office.

"Gee! Hal appears to be distinguishing himself in great shape," he thought. "It's funny how he is up against Gregory every time, and then gets the better of the rascal. It's singular that the police haven't caught that rascal yet. Just think of his nerve to make a second attack on his uncle. He is certainly a bird."

Hal was already in the office when Will walked in.

"I see your name in the paper again," said Will.

"Yes, did you read about last night's affair?"

"Sure I did. The story occupied a prominent place in the paper. I couldn't very well miss it. You appear to have had a strenuous time."

"You can bet I did. Gregory fired twice at me, and one of the bullets came so close to my head that I don't see how it missed me. He wasn't ten feet away when he shot at me."

"The paper states that you did some shooting yourself, and that you slightly wounded Gregory in the arm," said Will.

"That's right. I fired five shots altogether, but without much result. I'm afraid I never would win a prize in a pistol contest."

"Shooting at a man is different from shooting at a mark I've heard, particularly if that man has a gun himself."

"I guess you're right."

"Tell me all about the affair. I'll bet the paper didn't have half of the facts."

Hal gave him an outline of the affair, which was much more complete than the newspaper account. By the time he had finished all the clerks were standing around listening. The cashier's appearance sent them to their desks, and soon afterwards both boys were dispatched on errands.

Strange to say the police failed to catch either Gregory or Case. They had either left the city or were stowed away in some secure hiding place. At the end of a week Mr. Goodman offered \$1,000 for their apprehension, or for the capture of his nephew alone. This stimulated the detective force to fresh exertion, but brought no results. By that time L. & N. shares had advanced to 95. That rise of three points put Hal about \$1,000 ahead of the game.

"I guess I'm a pretty lucky chap," he told himself. "The boom I'm looking for ought to come soon."

The boom did come soon, four days later. The stock bounded up to par in an hour one morning, and set all the traders by the ears. There was excitement to burn that day as the price mounted up. It closed that afternoon at 105, and the Street was full of excited ~~larks~~ who had invested their little piles.

Next morning it opened at 105 1-2, and quickly

went to 106. When Hal went to the Exchange with a message to his boss it was up to 108. He concluded not to take any more chances with it, but circumstances prevented him from getting to the little bank till along in the afternoon. L. & N. was going at 110 and a fraction when he finally put in his selling order. As the inevitable decline did not come till the following day, he realized a profit of \$6,300. That made him worth \$10,000. He told nobody about his success in the stock market but his mother, from whom he had no secrets.

She congratulated him on his luck, and hoped it would continue. A week later he noticed that M. & H. was going up, and he decided to take a chance on it, as it was regarded as pretty good stock. He bought 500 shares, putting up half of his capital on margin. As he was not trusting to a tip this time, he did not believe he ought to risk any more money on it. The little bank got it for him at 81, and next day it went up two points.

Next day was Saturday, and as Vivian had promised to take a sail with him on a small sloop-yacht belonging to a member of his yacht club, he went up to the Bronx to escort her down to the club-house as soon as he got his lunch at a restaurant.

As the owner of the boat was not going along, Hal had invited Will Chambers to accompany them, telling him to be at the club-house at a certain time. Will was on hand and was not a little impressed by Vivian's beauty and sweetness when Hal introduced him to her. Hal also introduced several of his club-mates to her, and they were all agreed that Miss King was a peach. The three young people put off to the sloop in a small boat, accompanied by a club member to take the rowboat back to the landing-stage.

"Run up the jib, Will," said Hal, as he began removing the stops from the mainsail.

In a few minutes both sails were set and the boat was heading down the North River under a smacking breeze which keeled the little craft over till the copper sheathing on her starboard side flashed back the rays of the afternoon sun.

Having perfect confidence in Hal's ability to sail a boat as well as to take care of her, Vivian yielded to the exhilarating sensation of being whisked along over the sun-kissed water at a lively rate. The sloop was a swift sailer, and she covered the distance to the Battery in a short time. Hal kept her well out of the way of the numerous craft in the river, for he was taking no chances with such precious freight as his charmer on board.

"Now where do you want to go, Vivian?" he asked her, as the boat darted into the bay.

"I haven't any choice," she replied. "Go anywhere you wish."

"Then we'll go down the bay and back, I guess," answered Hal.

He headed for the island where the Statue of Liberty reached its gigantic form into the air. Sweeping around the eastern end of the island he headed for the Kill von Kull passage, dividing Staten Island from the State of New Jersey. This was quite a sail, but the sloop flew along like a bird. As they neared the mouth of the strait they saw a large, weather-beaten sloop aiming in for Newark Bay. A heavily bearded man of light frame stood at the helm, while a bigger man,

also heavily bearded, was pacing the deck near him.

Both men wore slouch hats, pulled down to their eyes, and they watched every boat that approached their craft. They saw the little sloop-yacht as she came bowling toward them, and the big man took a small but powerful pair of opera glasses from his pocket and surveyed the persons aboard of her. In a moment or two he uttered an exclamation of surprise. The chap at the helm looked at him.

"Nothing wrong about the boat is there?" he asked, with a shade of anxiety in his tone. "I don't think we left any trail for the detectives to follow."

"No, there's no difference aboard of her; but there's a girl on her I'll give a lot to get hold of."

"What do you want with a girl, Titus? Ain't we got enough to do to look after ourselves?"

"And the boy who did us up at Goodman's house is aboard of her, too," continued the man, who was Gregory in disguise.

"He is!" cried the steersman, who, the reader probably has guessed, was Gabe Case, also in disguise. "If we could get hold of him, put a stone around his neck and drop him into the bay it would give me a lot of satisfaction. I haven't forgotten how he got the best of me in that bond matter. I owe him something for that and I like to pay my debts. There's three of them in the boat; do you know who the other one is?"

"He's the other messenger at Glass' office. He doesn't amount to anything. If there was any way of enticing them aboard I'd hail them."

"If it wasn't for the girl I'd tell you of a way," said Case. "We can't afford to be bothered with a female. Things are too desperate."

"I tell you I want that girl the worst way," said Gregory. "I couldn't hit old man Goodman harder than to get her into my power and compel her to marry me."

"How could you make her marry you if she wouldn't? If you know when you're well off you'll leave her alone."

"You said you knew a way of enticing them aboard. What is it?"

"I'm not stuck on having the girl aboard," growled Case.

"Well, I am. If we're going to pull together you don't want to oppose my wishes. What is your plan? If you've got one let's hear it quick, for that boat will be up to us in a minute."

Not over willingly Case explained his idea.

"Well, I don't know that it will work, but it's worth trying," said Gregory.

In the meanwhile the sloop-yacht rapidly drew near the lumbering sloop.

"Hello!" exclaimed Hal, suddenly, "what's the matter aboard that craft?"

Will and Vivian looked around at her.

"The chap who was steering staggered away from the tiller and then fell on the deck as if something had happened to him," went on Hal. "Look at him squirming around like a person in a fit. The other man doesn't know what to do with him. The vessel, without a guiding hand, has fallen off, and is wobbling around like a drunken Dutchman. Why don't that chap go to the rudder and put her on her course again? Then he could lash the tiller and go and attend to his companion. He must be a lubber. Now

he's making signs to us. I'll run close and see what he wants."

Hal altered the little sloop's course, ran her close as he dared to the other craft, and threw her up in the wind.

"What's the trouble, sir?" he inquired.

"My companion has a fit. Can you come aboard and help me out?" said the disguised Gregory.

Hal didn't fancy complying with his request. Besides, he couldn't very well leave his own boat.

"Not very well," he replied. "Why don't you bring your craft up into the wind and lash the rudder. Then you can look after your friend."

"I don't know how. I'm no sailor," he answered.

Hal looked around to see if there was any other craft near, but there was not.

"Here, Will, hold the tiller. I'll see what I can do for the lobster," said Hal.

He went forward, picked up the mooring line and shouted to the man to catch it. The coil whizzed through the air and landed on board of the sloop. Gregory caught it and began pulling on it. Hal let his mainsail down with a run, and then going to the bow, caught the low rail of the sloop and swung himself aboard. Grabbing the line out of Gregory's hands he let his own craft swing clear of the bigger vessel, and tied the line to a cleat.

In a few minutes he had the big sloop on her course again. Picking up the loose end of a rope that lay coiled close by, he tied the tiller so it would stay in the right position. During all this Case lay still on the deck with his eyes shut. Hal looked at him and supposed he was unconscious.

"We'd better carry him into the cabin and lay him on one of the bunks," said Gregory. "Then you could run this vessel into one of the Bayonne wharves yonder where she could lie till Jones recovers."

"Where were you bound for?"

"Elizabethport."

"Is this chap subject to these spells?"

"Yes."

"Why isn't there somebody aboard with him to look out for his vessel in a case of this kind?"

"I suppose he didn't expect to be took down on such a short trip."

"Where are you from?"

"The Erie Basin."

"Well, I'll try and help you out. The only trouble is I have a young lady in my boat to look after."

"You could bring her aboard here after we get Jones into the cabin. She'd be safer than in your boat. It will only take a short time for us to run over to one of the wharves."

"Well, I might do that," replied the unsuspecting Hal.

"Of course you could."

Hal and Gregory carried the foxy Case into the Cabin and laid him on a bunk. Then Hal returned on deck, pulled the sloop-yacht alongside, and with Will's help assisted Vivian on board. Will followed, and the plan of the two rascals was successful. The three young people had been enticed on board.

CHAPTER XII.—The Biters Bitten.

Gregory came to the cabin door and beckoned to Hal. The boy, who was about to release the tiller, went to see what he wanted.

"Come in and look at him," said Gregory.

He might have said, "Walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly."

Hal fell into the trap and entered. Case was not in the bunk now, but waiting to pounce on the victim. Before Hal knew what was going to happen he was down on the floor in the grip of the two men. Case gagged him quickly to prevent him calling out, and then he was swiftly bound and thrown on to one of the bunks. Will was next decoyed in and treated to a dose of the same medicine. A trap in the floor was lifted and both boys were dropped into the hold. Gregory then went on deck and Case followed him, going to the tiller.

"You are wanted in the cabin, miss," said Gregory, in his politest tone.

Vivian wondered why Hal wanted her to come there, but she went in without any hesitation. The place was vacant. As she stood just inside the entrance somewhat bewildered, Gregory stepped inside and closed the door.

"I will now reveal myself to you, my dear Miss King," he said, removing his false whiskers and beard.

"Titus Gregory!" she exclaimed, shrinking away.

"Yes. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the cabin of my sloop."

"Where is Hal Halman and his friend Mr. Chambers?"

"In the hold underneath your feet."

"Why are they there?" she asked, anxiously.

"Because I considered it advisable to get them out of the way."

"What is the meaning of all this?" she asked, nervously.

"The meaning is that I am going to use you as a hostage to prevent my uncle from pushing matters against me. Incidentally, I expect to marry you in order to be able to dictate terms to Mr. Goodman."

"Marry me!" gasped Vivian.

"Why not? I love you and will devote my life to making you happy."

"But I do not love you, therefore it is impossible that we can ever marry."

"Nothing impossible in this world, my dear Miss King. You are in my power and must consent to do as I wish. If you refuse to be my wife it will go hard with Hal and your guardian. The lives of both depend on your decision in the matter."

"Their lives!" fluttered the girl.

"Their lives. I have determined to marry you, and marry you I will. To-night the ceremony shall take place in Elizabethport. As soon as it is dark your decision must be made. If yes, then Hal and his friend will be released and put aboard their boat after the performing of the ceremony, and your guardian will be safe from any further act on my part; but if you decline to go willingly before a clergyman with me, Hal Halman will be dropped overboard in the darkness with a weight about his feet to drown in the waters of Newark Bay. I will now leave you

to think it over. Mr. Goodman has probably told you that I am a man who means business when I undertake anything. Well, I mean business now. If you have any regard at all for that you will hesitate before you consign him to a watery grave."

Thus speaking, Gregory opened the door, walked out, and then locked it on the outside, leaving the girl a prey to the most unhappy reflections. Below in the hold the two boys were also up against their own unpleasant reflections as they lay close together in the dark, wondering what the whole thing meant, for to neither had the rascals exposed their identity.

Hal was not a lad to remain idle in an emergency. His thoughts did not dwell on his own disagreeable situation, but on the position Vivian was placed in. She was under his protection, and it was his duty to fly to her aid if he could by any means manage it. He struggled desperately to release his arms. The rascals supposed they had bound him securely, but in their hurry they were not as particular as they might have been. In a few minutes he got one of his arms loose, and the other followed without any trouble. He tore the gag from across his mouth and threw it aside. Pulling out his match-safe which he always carried, he struck a light and saw where his companion lay. He whisked out his knife and cut Will free in no time.

"Gee! What are we up against?" asked Will.

"Blessed if I know, but we've got to turn the tables somehow, for Miss King's sake if not for ourselves."

"We're in the hold of this hooker. Strike another match and let us look around."

Hal did so. There was nothing but a lot of iron ballast and rubbish to be seen within the sloping ribs of the sloop. There was a narrow bulkhead aft close to the sternpost, and another forward, much wider, dividing off a small section of the hold. The boys made their way to the latter, and feeling of it, discovered that one of the planks had been broken in the center by contact with some weighty object. It was not noticeable except on inspection. Hal put his foot against the fracture and it yielded in a way that showed it could be broken off by sufficient pressure.

He looked around among the ballast for a piece of iron of sufficient size to use against it. He found a piece of gas pipe, and putting the end of this against the spot in the plank, both boys exerted their muscles, and presently caused the board to break off. Pushing the upper half in so that Will could grasp the lower section, the plank was dislodged after awhile leaving an opening. Through this Hal flashed a match and discovered that the space forward of the bulkhead was used as a cook-room or galley.

"If we can get in there we can no doubt reach the deck and put up a stiff fight against those two rascals," said Hal.

"Then we must get in there," said Will; "but to do that we must dislodge another board."

All the other boards appeared to be pretty strong and well secured, but the boys were determined to overcome the obstacle somehow, and they worked at the bulkhead in various ways, but without much success. Thus more than an hour passed and darkness was settling down over the face of nature. The sloop was now in Newark Bay, but as the men did not wish to reach shore

for some time yet, they held a course away from their ultimate destination. The sloop was a lazy sailer anyway, and the wind had dropped somewhat since they entered the bay.

Hal and Will did not pause to rest themselves, for they could not tell when one of their captors might enter the galley to prepare a meal, and he could easily defeat their purpose. At last by main strength, after repeated efforts, they dislodged the second plank sufficiently to permit them both to squeeze through into the cook-room.

Entrance to the galley was had by means of a scuttle in the deck, and the boys were about to try it, to see whether it was fastened or not, when it was suddenly thrown open from the outside and one of the men, the smaller one, jumped down. What with the fast failing light above, and the gloom of the galley, he did not at once see the two boys who had shrunk against the bulkhead. He reached for a match, struck it and lighted a small lamp. As he was about to turn around Hal, feeling that the time for action had come, struck him under the ear with all his strength. The fellow went sprawling over the stove.

The boys gave him no time to recover, but pummeled him furiously till he lay quite dazed.

"Gag him with that towel," said Hal, and Will obeyed orders.

"Now hold him down on the floor till I get one of the ropes we were tied with," said Hal, working himself back into the hold.

He soon returned with the rope, and they bound the rascal tight.

"One of them is disposed of," said Hal. "It ought to be easy to lay out the other fellow."

"Say, this chap has false whiskers on," said Will.

"Pull them off. That shows these rascals are working under cover," said Hal.

Will plucked the beard off the man and his features were revealed.

"By George!" cried Hal, in astonishment. "I know this fellow. It's the chap who got the bond away from me in Newtown. He was also Gregory's companion in his burglarious attack on Mr. Goodman's house a short time ago. Mr. Goodman has offered a thousand dollars for the arrest of him and Gregory."

"We ought to win the reward. Say, Hal, maybe the other rascal on deck is Gregory. They probably travel together," said Will.

"It's dollars to doughnuts you are right. If we nab him we'll have done what the police have failed to do, and Mr. Goodman will be pleased to death. His presence aboard this sloop would account for the trick played upon us to get us on board. I don't know any other reason why we should have been captured."

"It's a good thing for you that we managed to get out of the hold. If Gregory is aboard he probably intends to do you up somehow. You know how he hates you, and he must be down on you now worse than ever."

"Well, come on deck. It is time we tackled the other fellow and took possession of the sloop."

"We've got to be cautious for he might have a revolver," said Will.

"Maybe this fellow has one," said Hal.

He felt of Case's hip pocket and pulled out a bulldog revolver.

"This will help us out if he is armed," said Hal.

They scrambled out on deck and looked aft in the darkness. The other fellow was at the wheel where they supposed he was.

"You go that side and I'll crawl aft this side. If he hails us we must jump up and make a rush," said Hal.

So they started aft like two shadows. The rise of the cabin roof hid them somewhat, but the darkness was their best ally. Gregory, dreaming of subjugating Vivian, never suspected what was about to happen. As they began creeping over the top of the cabin, the white background of the mainsail brought Hal's figure into view, and Gregory saw it. He saw it was moving and he couldn't understand what it was.

"Who's there?" he cried.

The boys jumped up at once and rushed toward him. Taken by surprise, they were on him before he could draw his revolver to defend himself. He stepped backward to avoid their blows, forgetting the short space that lay between him and the low rail. In another moment he was clawing frantically at the air in a vain effort to recover his balance. Then he disappeared backward, and a loud splash told the boys that he had fallen into the bay.

CHAPTER XIII.—Treed.

"He's over," cried Will, in a tone of excitement. They both leaned over and looked into the dark waters, but it was impossible to see Gregory when he came up, and therefore out of the question to make an effort to save him. There was nothing at hand they could throw over, so it was clear unless he was a mighty good swimmer that his fate was sealed.

"Well, it can't be helped. We may be the cause of his death, but he deserves his fate," said Hal, as he seized the tiller and brought the sloop on her course again. "Go into the cabin, Will, and see how Miss King is, for of course she's there."

Will found the cabin door locked, but as the key was in the lock he soon had the door open, and found the cabin as dark as the ace of spades.

"Are you there, Miss King?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," she cried joyfully, for she recognized his voice. "You are Mr. Chambers. Where is Hal?"

She came forward from her seat on a locker.

"He's at the tiller here. 'Come out,'" said Will.

"And those men—where have they gone?" she asked, nervously.

"One of them is a prisoner in the galley forward. The other, Titus Gregory, went overboard, and it's likely he's drowned by this time."

Hal had swung the sloop's head around and now had her headed for the lights of Elizabethport.

"Come this way, Vivian," said Hal. "Everything is all right now. We escaped from the hold where the rascals dumped us, and have turned the tables on them. Mr. Goodman's nephew was one of them, but he fell overboard when we tried to capture him, and I guess that marks his finish. I suppose you didn't know that he was aboard."

"I did, for he showed himself to me in the cabin," she replied.

"Oh, he did? What did he say to you?"

Vivian told the substance of the interview between her and Gregory.

"So the scoundrel intended to drop me overboard if you wouldn't marry him?" said Hal. "Well, I'm glad the alternative was not forced upon you. To save my life at the cost of your own happiness would have been too heavy a price."

"I would have had to yield, for I never could have let them murder you," she said, with a shudder.

"Never mind. You are saved from the necessity of making a decision," said the young messenger.

"Where is our sloop, Hal?" asked Will, suddenly. "I can't see her."

"She must be towing behind. There is the mooring line around that cleat. Pull in on it."

Will seized the line and pulled.

He felt no resistance, and the line came in easily.

"She has parted from the line," said Will.

"The dickens you say."

He looked at the wet end of the rope.

"Why it's been cut with a knife. It's been done lately, for I was sure I saw the sloop astern when Gregory went overboard."

"Maybe that rascal isn't drowned after all," said Will. "He may have caught hold of the sloop and saved himself, then climbed on board and cut her loose."

"I wouldn't be surprised but that is what he did. Then we are likely to hear from him again. Some people always land on their feet no matter how bad they are," said Hal.

They soon ran alongside one of the Elizabethport wharves, and Hal sent Will into the town to find the station-house, tell their story, and bring down a policeman to take charge of the sloop and the prisoner Case.

Will was gone the best part of an hour, during which Hal and Vivian sat together on the roof of the cabin talking over their afternoon's adventures. Will brought two officers back with him. One was to remain on board of the sloop till relieved, while the other, after taking a look at the prisoner, handcuffed him and led him away. Hal told the officers that Titus Gregory had probably made his escape in the sloop-yacht, and requested that a hunt be made for him and the boat.

The three young people then went to a restaurant and had dinner, after which they connected with a train for Jersey City. It was quite late when Hal landed Vivian at her home. Although Mr. Goodman knew she was in Hal's company, nevertheless he had grown anxious because she was out so long. When he heard their story he was astonished to find they had got into the clutches of his rascally nephew.

"I thought he had left the State," said the money-lender. "I don't see how he managed to elude the police. So you think he escaped in your boat?" he said to Hal.

"It looks like it, sir. I have put the Elizabethport authorities on to him, and I hope the boat will be recovered and Gregory landed in prison."

Word reached Hal on the following evening that the boat had been found tied to a Bayonne wharf. No trace of Titus Gregory was discovered, however, so the boy concluded he had made good his escape. On Monday afternoon he went

to Bayonne with Will, claimed the boat, and sailed her back to the mooring ground of the boat-club.

Gabe Case had, in the meanwhile, been brought to Jersey City. He refused to cross the river voluntarily, so the District Attorney instituted extradition proceedings to get him to the Tombs. This would take time, however, and while it was under way Case was held in the Jersey City jail. Before the end of the week Hal sold his M. & H. shares for a six point advance, making \$3,000 profit. After their ticklish experience aboard the sloop, Hal and Vivian were warmer friends than ever.

He showed his devotion to her in many ways, while she gave him every reason to believe that she was not indifferent to his attention.

The old man was perfectly satisfied with the way things were going with them, and had little doubt that in time Hal would ask him for Vivian's hand. For a couple of weeks things went along in a rut with Hal. Then one Saturday morning he recalled the fact that he had not availed himself of Dick Cunningham's invitation to visit him at his home in Newtown.

"I guess I'll go out there this afternoon and call on him," he thought. "I haven't anything else on the hooks and I don't believe I could put the afternoon in better."

Accordingly after lunch he crossed over to Jersey City, and took the trolley car for Newtown. When he reached the lake front near Dick's house he saw that the sloops belonging to Dick and his chum Archie were not at their moorings. That was a sign that the boys were off somewhere on the lake. However, he called at the Cunningham residence and asked the gardener, who was at work on the lawn, where Dick was.

"Gone off sailing," was the reply.

"I suppose he is not likely to be back soon?" replied the disappointed Hal.

"No, I don't think he will be."

"Well, tell him when he returns that Hal Halman, of New York, came out to see him."

"I will," nodded the gardener.

Hal started for the trolley car to return to New York. After walking a couple of blocks he took a wrong turn, and walking some distance, he woke up to the fact that he was going in the wrong direction. Looking around he saw the spire of a church in the distance which he recognized as belonging to a house of worship not far from Main Street. He started toward it. He soon came to an extensive piece of property covered with trees.

He had got half way across it when suddenly a wicked looking dog dashed out of the shrubbery and made for him in a menacing way. Hal realized that he was in a bad fix. He was a good runner, but could not outrun the dog. The only thing, but could not outrun the dog. The last tree. He barely reached it and scrambled up into the place where the trunk divided into three ponderous branches when the dog was up to him. He made a fierce spring and snapped his jaws viciously within an inch of Hal's right foot, and then fell back on the ground. The minutes passed and nobody came. At the end of half an hour Hal grew impatient, but he couldn't help himself.

The dog seemed to be on the job for an in-

definite time. Another hour passed, and the boy was willing to swear that he had never put in an unpleasanter period of time. Close by he saw the roof of a large summer-house. The limb he was on overlapped it. Hal thought if he could reach it he might be able to play a march on the dog. He concluded to make the attempt, so he climbed further out on the limb. The animal got up and came under the limb to see what his expected victim was up to.

He couldn't see Hal, but he knew he was progressing in that direction, so he kept pace with the boy's progress. At length Hal got over the summer-house and was about to swing himself down when the limb suddenly snapped some feet behind him. Down he went with a crash on the light roof. It had not been built with a view of sustaining such an impact, therefore it gave way and let Hal down into an inside compartment where the gardener kept a supply of flower pots. Hal's head struck one of them, giving him a nasty cut and sending his senses wool-gathering.

CHAPTER XIV.—Hal Halman's Gilt-Edged Tip.

The dog ran around the summer-house and then into it, but the object of his attention was not to be seen. For half an hour he kept watch, but hearing nothing more from the boy, he came to the conclusion that his victim had got away, so he started off with his nose on the ground to try and trace him. Half an hour passed away, and all remained quiet in the summer-house, then Hal recovered his senses. He sat up and looked around him.

The hole in the fragile roof, and the litter of wrecked flower pots, told their story, and everything was plain enough to him. His head was sore, and putting up his hand, he felt the dried blood around the wound. "I got it good and hard that time," he muttered. "I wonder if that brute is around yet?"

He got up, shoved his head through the hole and looked around on that side of the summer-house, but saw no sign of the dog. Feeling rather shaky, he cleared away some of the pots and sat down to recover a bit before descending by the rustic ladder. While he sat there he heard the voices of two persons outside. Two well-dressed men entered the summer-house and sat down there.

"I tell you, Dixon, you can't do better than to go in with us. We've a barrel of money, and we're bound to skin the market," said one of them.

The words "barrel of money" and "market" captured Hal's attention at once, and he listened with bated breath to hear more.

"What is the stock this syndicate is going to try to corner?" asked Dixon.

"I can't tell that till you are one of us. Give your word that you'll contribute \$100,000 and I'll tell you everything," replied his companion.

"One hundred thousand is a lot of money. Before I commit myself I'd like to know what I'm up against."

"You're up against a sure winner. I'll guarantee that."

"How do you know it's a sure winner? Wall

Street is full of surprises. That has been my experience since I entered the Street."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I know you to be a square man. If I give you an outline of the deal, will you give me your word not to say a word about it in case you decide not to go in?"

"Yes. You can depend on me, Sanford."

"I'm willing to take a chance because I think you'll join us when you understand the matter."

"Go on."

"You've heard of the little Iron Mountain Railroad?"

"Yes. It was built by a number of capitalists when Iron Mountain loomed up as a new Golconda for iron ore. The mine failed to pan out according to expectations, and the railroad has been a losing venture. Most of the original stockholders got out at a loss, and those who held on would be glad to sell if anybody would offer them a fair price."

"You've got it down right. Well, our syndicate is after the Iron Mountain road," said Sanford.

"What for. What good is it? It's a dead issue. I've seen brokers run away when some trader offered the stock at 35, though its par value is fifty."

"It can be bought to-day at 30."

"What if it can? I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole at any price."

"That's because you don't know what the members of the syndicate have found out about Iron Mountain."

"What have they found out?"

"The syndicate, with two or three exceptions, represent the big shareholders of the mining company."

"Well?"

"Dissatisfied with the output of ore, which has been dwindling ever since the mine opened up with a big hurrah, they have had experts prospecting the mountain for many months. A short time ago a new vein was found leading to what promises to be the ore discovery of the century. Enough ore has been mapped out to assure the company returns up in the millions. All this ore will have to be carried to market over the Iron Mountain Railroad. The moment the news gets out, the stock of that line, now a drug on the market, will boom to par, and those now holding the stock will not part with their holdings even at that. The syndicate proposes to go into the market in a few days and buy up every share in sight. When every share that can be bought at the present low price has been obtained, then the ore discovery will be made public in the daily press. Then you'll hear a howl go up in the Stock Exchange from those who have parted with a good thing at three-fifths of its value. Ten shares will be allotted pro rata among the members of the syndicate, and the owners will be at liberty to either hold on for the big dividends in prospect, or they can sell out either a part or the whole of their shares at the enhanced value of the stock. There, you have the news that hundreds of wealthy men would pay well to learn at this stage of the game. Are you on?"

"By George, I am. You guarantee the facts to be as you have stated them?"

"On my word of honor. One hundred thousand invested in the syndicate will return a profit of \$40,000 inside of three weeks."

"I'm with you. It will take me a few days to get all the money, however."

"That's all right. There will be a meeting of the syndicate to-morrow afternoon at the office of the Iron Mountain Mining Co. Call at my office at half-past three with a certified check for \$25,000 made out to the order of George Fellows, and I will take you around and introduce you. The other payments will be called for during the week. Operations will begin on Tuesday by brokers already selected. We expect to collar the bulk of the shares by next Monday week."

"I guess you've put me on to a good thing, Sanford."

"I've given you the finest tip going to-day," said Sanford, lighting a cigar.

"I sha'n't forget the favor. You'll stay to dinner, of course."

"I have no objection."

The two gentlemen got up and left the summer-house without being aware that they had had an unsuspected listener in the little compartment above their heads.

"Talk about tips," breathed Hal, "that is what I call a gilt-edged Al copper-bottomed, 32-carat fine pointer. If I don't get in on the ground floor with the rest of the insiders it won't be for want of trying. I've got \$13,000 ready to put up. That will collar 1,300 shares on a ten per cent. margin, and as the market value of the Iron Mountain Railroad stock is only \$30 a share, my money will represent one-third of the total price, and therefore I'll only be charged interest on \$26,000, the balance the little bank will have to advance to secure the shares for me. It seems like a shame that I haven't got more money to take advantage of such a snap. Such a tip will hardly come my way again. I wonder if I dare ask Mr. Goodman to loan me a few thousand more? I could explain the situation to him, and show him that it's the chance of my life. If I could get hold of 5,000 shares, why I might make \$100,000. The party by the name of Sanford seems confident the stock will go to par as soon as the ore discovery is made public. That would represent a profit of \$20 on every share. I wonder how many shares there are floating around? Lord, if I were a millionaire I'd scoop the market."

Hal descended the rustic ladder and looked out at the door.

With some caution Hal made his way across the property to the next street. From that point he made his way to the trolley car without trouble, and was soon on his way back to Jersey City.

CHAPTER XV.—Scooping the Market.

He could think of nothing on his way home but his golden tip, and the more he considered it the more resolved he was to talk the matter over with Mr. Goodman when he called on Vivian the next evening. On the following evening he went up to the Goodman house. He was expected

and Vivian had on a new gown and was otherwise tuckered out for his benefit.

"You're looking fine to-night, Vivian," he said, regarding her with an admiring eye. "You never looked prettier."

"Thank you for the compliment," she said, with a rosy blush.

"By the way, is Mr. Goodman in his room?"

"Yes, I think he is."

"I have some special business to see him about. Will you excuse me for a short time? I assure you it is a very important matter."

Hal went downstairs and knocked at the office door. He was told to enter. The old man shook hands with him and said he was glad to see him. Hal got down to business at once. He described his adventure with the ferocious dog on the previous afternoon in Newtown, and how it led to his getting hold of a first-class tip which he proposed to back with his capital of \$13,000.

He told Mr. Goodman all he had heard Mr. Sanford tell his friend Dixon about the discovery of a great find of iron ore in the Iron Mountain mine, and what effect that would have on the stock of the railroad line running between the mine and the O. & B. road. Mr. Goodman went over the matter with Hal, and at length he was satisfied that the boy had hold of a good thing.

"I agree with you, Hal, that this is a chance you can't afford to miss. But you can't go into this deal and continue to attend to your duties in Mr. Glass' office. You have got to watch your investment right along. I think well enough of your tip to finance you a considerable amount. I'll meet you to-morrow morning at the office of Drummond & Co. at ten o'clock. That will give you time to arrange for a two weeks' leave of absence from your office. I will introduce you to Mr. Drummond, who is an old friend of mine, and we will go into the further details of this matter in his office."

Hal was at the office next morning at his usual time, and entertained Will with the story of the dog episode, but said nothing about the matter connected with his tip. When Mr. Glass came in Hal told him that he wanted a vacation of two weeks, as he had some very important business to attend to. As business was slow he got it without much trouble. On the stroke of ten he walked into the office of Drummond & Co. Mr. Goodman had not yet arrived, but he came in ten minutes later.

He introduced Hal to the broker as his grand-nephew, and one of the brightest boys in New York.

"Hal wants to buy a few thousand shares of Iron Mountain Railroad stock, on the usual ten per cent. margin," said the money-lender.

"Iron Mountain Railroad!" exclaimed the broker, in a tone of surprise and with a look that expressed disapproval. "What does he want that stock for? There is absolutely nothing in it."

"There is more in it than you imagine, sir," spoke up Hal. "Have you any idea how much of it there is on the market?"

Mr. Drummond pulled a financial "blue book" out of a drawer in his desk, and after consult-

ing it said that 100,000 shares had been issued at 45, of which probably sixty per cent. was held by inside stockholders.

In addition to the money realized from the sales of the stock, a first mortgage of \$2,000,000 had been put on the road to furnish its equipment and buildings. After some further talk Mr. Goodman told Hal to buy 10,000 shares of the stock, handing him his check, made out to the boy's order, for \$87,000, which with Hal's own money would make up the required deposit. The deal was then put through. Mr. Goodman then left him and went uptown.

Drummond bought the 10,000 in small lots wherever he could get them. He had no trouble in securing the stock at the market price of 30. Hal located 5,000 more shares that afternoon, and reported the fact to Mr. Goodman that evening. The old man handed him another check for \$50,000 and told him to get Drummond to buy the shares. Hal put the order in first thing in the morning, and the broker called upon the parties and got the shares.

Drummond learned then that several brokers were also buying in all the stock they could find. The fact that Iron Mountain stock was being bought in quantity attracted attention and the traders began to grow inquisitive. The demand became so great that the price ran up to 50 in a day or two. Then Hal ordered Drummond to unload. The shares were eagerly taken, but by the time Drummond had got rid of the last of it the traders began to suspect there was a nigger in the woodpile, and the price fell rapidly to 40, causing a panic among the public.

Hal scooped in a profit of \$300,000 by his deal. When he collected his money he returned the amount advanced by Mr. Goodman, and thanked the old man for his kindness.

About this time Gabe Case was put on trial for his part in the attempted burglary of Mr. Goodman's house. While the trial was on, Titus Gregory was discovered in Chicago, and after shooting an officer, killed himself. Case was convicted and got a ten-year sentence. Shortly afterward Hal asked Vivian to be his wife some day in the near future, and she willingly consented.

And now with a happy and successful future before our hero, we will ring down the curtain on the boy who scooped the market.

Next week's issue will contain "A BOY OF BUSINESS; OR, HUSTLING FOR THE DOLLARS."



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SHORT-STOP SAM

or

The Boss of the Baseball Boys

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER V.—(Continued).

The pitcher nodded. Then he sent in a pretty one and a strike was called on the batsman.

The next was a high one, and as the batsman struck at it, Timlin thought he would try him with another of the same sort.

But he misjudged it this time, and the ball went so high that it was impossible for Catcher Jones to reach it.

Another run came in, making three for the inning.

"They are getting rattled," said Jack Cuny to his chums. "The Edgertons will beat them yet, see if they don't."

But he hardly felt the way he spoke.

The next man to the bat hit the first ball pitched, and sent it high in the air.

Timlin backed to get under it, but glanced over his shoulder and saw that Short-stop Sam was ready to take the ball.

There being two men out, the holders of the bases took the cue from the coaches to "run on anything," and they legged it for all they were worth.

The player who had left third touched the home-plate just as the ball descended into Sam's ready hands.

"Out!" called the umpire, so the run did not count.

But the visitors now had four runs to their credit against ten for the Peerless club.

And there was one more inning to be played.

Pete Perkins, the lanky third baseman, was first to the bat, and when he stepped up the rooters gave him a cheer. For Pete had been doing good work with the stick that day.

At the second ball pitched he cracked a high one out to center.

But the fielder got under it and nabbed it very neatly, so Pete had his run to first for nothing.

Reardon was the next to step up to the plate, and he, too, cracked out a fly that was caught.

That made two out.

Peerless had ten runs, and they were not destined to get any more that inning, it seemed, for McGuire struck out and the side was retired.

The visitors went to the bat with a grim determination to do or die.

They died, so to speak.

They had five chances, and succeeded in getting two men on bases.

The other three chances were nipped in the bud by Short-stop Sam, who threw two out at first, and caught a hot liner for the third.

That ended the greatest game that had ever been played in Sharpton. Great for two reasons: First, because it was well played and exciting throughout; and second, because a nine composed

of boys had defeated a semi-professional team of men, whose ages averaged twenty-five.

The members of the swell athletic club left the grandstand in disgust.

Tom Cuny's face wore a look that was almost savage until he happened to look up and see a handsome, stylishly dressed girl of perhaps sixteen coming down from the other side of the grandstand.

She was Lena Bagley, the only daughter of the wealthy mill-owner.

Cuny lifted his hat and bowed politely, and as the girl rather coldly acknowledged the salute she stepped upon a plank that had not been nailed. It tilted with her, and over the rail at the end of the grandstand she went, a frightened scream on her lips.

CHAPTER VI.

Sam Has a Fight.

Sam Walters and Pete Perkins happened to be near the grandstand when they heard a scream.

Sam's quick eye located where it came from instantly. He saw a girl falling over the end of the structure almost above him.

Perkins was so surprised that he stood still in his tracks.

But not so with Short-stop Sam!

He bounded forward like a shot and caught the girl in his arms, breaking her fall and landing her lightly upon her feet.

The mill-owner's daughter did not faint or go into hysterics. She was not hurt, she articulated rather faintly:

"You saved me from being killed, or badly hurt. Oh, how can I thank you!"

"Isn't necessary, miss," retorted the young shortstop of the Peerless nine. "Calm yourself, please. I am very glad I was in time to save you."

By this time a number who had witnessed the accident had crowded around.

"It's Short-stop Sam!" shouted the small boy who had worked his way into the enclosure by climbing the high board fence, and who had assisted so much in the rooting for the home team.

"Gee! You jest oughter seen it, fellers! He caught dat young lady jest as easy as he did dat high fly a little while ago. Short-stop Sam is a regular hero, an' don't you make no mistake on dat!"

Then it was that a wild cheer went up.

There were enough of the spectators who had seen the boy save the girl from falling to the ground to make the welkin ring, and they did it with a will.

Lena Bagley was a rather brave sort of a girl. She proved it when she did not go off into a swoon, as most girls would have done.

"Thank you, Short-stop Sam," she said, taking the boy's hand and giving it a gentle squeeze. "I shall never forget you for catching me and saving me from a bad fall."

Before Sam could make a reply Jack Cuny stepped up and took the girl by the arm.

"I will escort you home in my auto, Miss Bagley," the young man said. "I am so glad you are not hurt."

She went away with him, and then our hero was seized by several of the admiring throng and carried from the enclosure on their shoulders.

The rest of the nine followed and the yelling and applause was deafening.

All this was enough to give a boy a "swelled head," as the saying goes, but Sam did not allow himself to get that way.

He took it all good-naturedly, and when he was finally placed upon his feet on the ground he simply said:

"Don't do that again, fellows. I can't say that I like it. I am only an ordinary boy, and have to work for a living. If I put up a good game to-day I am glad of it. And if I happened to come along just in time to catch the young lady it was a lucky thing for her. Any one would have done the same thing had they been there, the same as I was."

"No, they wouldn't!" declared Pete Perkins. "I was as near to her as you were, Sam, and I'll be hanged if I had sense enough to make a move."

"The fellow who laid the planks on the stand ought to be punished for not nailing them right," said one of the citizens and backers of the game. "I am going to have it investigated."

The boys got back to their quarters over the feed store after a while, well satisfied with the result of the game.

Short-stop Sam was the lion of the hour. Everybody praised him, even to Len Marks, who had appeared at the last moment, realizing that it was best for him to act friendly toward the boy, since his foul scheme had failed.

For, be it known, Marks had bought the bottle of ginger-ale and doctored it with a nauseous drug, just for the purpose of rendering the new short-stop unfit to finish the game.

But the scheme had failed, and all the young villain thought of now was to let it drop.

He knew the whole circumstances, and he thought it would be best to say something about it in order to clear himself of suspicion.

"Walters," said he, as he shook our hero by the hand, "I am very sorry that the ginger-ale made Simms sick. I bought the stuff to give you an invigorating drink, and if there was anything wrong about it the manufacturers are responsible for it. I can prove where I bought it and you saw me open the bottle, you know."

"That's all right," answered Sam. "So long as nothing serious resulted from it I am satisfied. Simms is about all right, they say, though he suffered with fearful cramps for a while."

Harry Bates looked at Marks rather scornfully, but said nothing, as he took Sam by the arm and pulled him away from him.

It was well toward supper time when our hero had removed his baseball costume and donned his street apparel, so he started homeward with Pete Perkins, who happened to live close to the little cottage Sam's father had rented.

It was in the part of the town known as the working-class quarter that the two boys lived, and as they neared the corner where they had to turn off from the main street an automobile came dashing along.

They thought they had time to cross ahead of it, so they started to do so.

They got across all right, but instead of keep-

ing on straight ahead, the auto made a sudden swerve for them, and they were forced to jump for their lives.

Pete Perkins shook his fist at the young man who was driving the auto, who turned around with a laughing face, as though it was something real smart that he had done.

Both boys saw who it was then. It was Jack Cuny, on his way back, after taking the mill-owner's daughter home.

When he saw the third baseman of the Peerless Club shaking his fist at him, Cuny stopped his automobile, while his face clouded with anger.

He turned and came back, the two boys waiting at the corner meanwhile.

"Come, Sam!" exclaimed Perkins. "He will get out and give us a thrashing if we stay here. That's the way he does, so I've heard."

"No, he won't thrash us, Pete. You just stay right where you are."

"What do you mean, you young hounds, by shaking your dirty fists at me?" Jack Cuny demanded, as he brought his machine to a stop and leaped out.

"What do you mean by trying to run over us?" Sam coolly answered.

"You lie if you say I tried to run over you! Why didn't you get out of the way? You had plenty of time."

Our hero's face turned slightly pale, and he bit his lips to check the angry feeling that forced its way to the front.

"I don't lie, and you are no gentleman for saying that!"

The words came from the lips of Short-stop Sam clear and steady.

"You do lie, you whelp!" cried Cuny, leaping forward. "I'll wring your neck for you if you don't get out of the way!"

Then one of the most surprising things that had ever occurred in the streets of Sharpton took place.

Sam Walters shot out his right fist and caught the president of the swell athletic club squarely in the mouth! As Cuny staggered back he followed it with a left jab in the stomach which sent the young man to the ground in a heap.

"I wouldn't take what you called me if you were twice as big as you are!" cried Short-stop Sam. "Now, if you are not satisfied, get up and we will fight it out!"

There was a cigar store on the corner, and from it came half a dozen young men and boys.

"It's Short-stop Sam, the boy who won the game!" cried one. "And he's knocked out Jack Cuny!"

Cuny's mouth was bleeding profusely, and the solar plexus blow had taken all the fight out of him for the present.

Some one assisted him to get up and climb into the auto, and then, with a venomous look at our hero, he exclaimed:

"You will suffer for this, Sam Walters! You will suffer for it as sure as my name is Jack Cuny!"

Then the automobile went off down the street, while a derisive laugh went up from the boys who had come out of the cigar store.

(To be continued.)

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

UP-TO-DATE BALLYHOO

Although the ballyhoo man has perhaps decreased in numbers and picturesqueness, Broadway sees a modern version of him in the uniformed guards standing before some of the large motion picture houses. In soft tones they inform the passing pedestrian that "There are seats without waiting," that "The next performance starts within five minutes" or that "The feature picture will be shown immediately."

ONE TURK HOLDS ON TO PIPE IN VILLAGE BANNING TOBACCO

The Yellow Crescent Anti-Tobacco Society is pouring propaganda on the obdurate head of the sole remaining adherent of the "hubble-bubble" in this village of several hundred who recently took a wholesale smokeless oath.

The one recalcitrant calmly sucks the amber mouthpiece of his narghile, replying to all arguments that he will continue to smoke until his death, not only for the solace of his soul, but also as a patriotic duty, tobacco being a State monopoly and an important source of revenue of the young republic.

WANT AMERICAN BOY SCOUTS AT JAPANESE CORONATION

The Union of Boy Scouts in Tokio is planning to invite seventeen representatives of Boy Scout organizations from the Eastern part of the United States to visit Japan at the time of the coronation of the Emperor at Kyoto next November. It is expected that the expenses of the visitors will be defrayed by the Japan-American association.

The program of entertainment for the American Boy Scouts includes several days' stay in Tokio, and visits to Nikko, Kamakura, Hakone, Nara and other sight-seeing spots of Japan, in addition to attending the enthronement ceremonies. The Japanese Boy Scouts also hope to take their young American friends on several camping trips.

URGES STUDY OF SAXOPHONE

"More City College students ought to know how to play the saxophone," Professor Edmund Burke, a member of the Faculty Committee supervising the Employment Bureau of the college, said recently. In fact, he was contemplating, he said, organizing a group of students in a class and teach them how to play the instrument, so that more of them might be able to fill the requests the bureau receives each Summer for musicians. This session, more than two hundred students have been placed in Summer resorts up State. Many are musicians, some are camp councilors, others have taken positions as waiters, and even bus boys and dishwashers.

The College Employment Bureau on the average supplies jobs to more than a thousand students during the year, and they earn about \$40,000. The bureau relies for its support on voluntary contributions from alumni and friends, since it is not recognized as a department of the college.

THE HOT CORN MAN IS HERE AS HERALD OF THE SUMMER

The hot dog and the chocolate-covered ice cream bar are suffering a temporary lapse of popularity on the sidewalks in the neighborhoods fringing lower First Avenue. Roasted chestnuts have gone their seasonal way and steaming sweet potatoes, too, having lost their lure, the sweet potato man has trundled off his clumsy, high-stacked cart with its tray of baking roots. The hot corn man heralds Summer's approach.

The hot corn vendor turns off from the busy avenue, where fruits and notions mingle on carts in the gutter and snails bring twenty cents a pound in the shell. He passes a corner where the atmosphere reeks with vinegar and a bearded merchant spears fat cucumbers in a sauerkraut setting. With an odd little stove, freshly besmeared with a thin coat of aluminum paint and its capacity augmented by storage bins made from old gasoline cans, the hot corn man creates a small sensation in the side streets. He trudges along silently, leaving it to his kettle's aroma to speak in his stead, and by the time he reaches the middle of the block business is waiting and dashing after his stove.

"Hot corn! Oh, gee!" a child on the sidewalk exclaims, and rushes forward for a coin. Pennies are extended to the hot corn merchant in as many grimy hands as he can serve for the moment. He lifts a newly polished lid and pokes into the vaporous depths with a bent fork bound to a long stick. Out comes a dripping ear, none too carefully shucked and still entangled in its silk. It is sufficiently tempting, however, to those who stand by, judging from the eagerness with which they crowd around. With something of a flourish the ear is laid on a board and firmly grasped, while a sharp knife divides it into portions. About an inch of hot corn sells for a penny, with a free hand permitted at the big tin salt-shaker.

One youngster after another takes his bit of corn, loosely folded in a scrap of paper and puts it to smacking lips.

Any odd bits left unsold for the moment go into a pot on the other side of the stove, to be fished out when other pennies are proffered.

MA'M'SELLE BERTHE

At a certain period in my professional career, now many years ago, though I do not propose to tell how many, for fear you will try to reckon up my age, a subject upon which I am rather reticent, a number of mysterious robberies and murders occurred in this city, to the perpetrators of which there appeared to be no clew.

One event in particular set me to thinking, and when a man of my business begins to do that he means something.

A well-known resident of an uptown street was found upon his own street in a state of unconsciousness, and robbed of everything valuable about his person, gold watch and chain, diamond shirt studs, money, rings and a locket set with pearls and diamonds.

This latter article was of a peculiar shape, and had the portraits of the owner and his wife inside, and was valued far beyond its intrinsic worth.

The man recovered after several days, during which the physicians despaired of saving him; but at last, when he was going so well that there was no longer any doubt that he would regain his health and strength, I visited him to see if he could recall where he had been on the evening of the robbery, as by that means I might discover some trace of the villains, for I had no doubt but this was a piece of work done by the gang I was looking for.

In the first place, I warned Mr. Blake—we will call him so, although that is not his real name—not to say anything to the newspaper reporters, or, if he did, to give them the impression that he remembered nothing whatever concerning his doings that evening.

I also requested our chief to say to those inquisitive busybodies that the police were utterly nonplused, and had no clew whatever to the rogues.

The papers abused us roundly for not finding out the scamps at once, but I kept my own counsel, and laughed in my sleeve at the wiseacres who thought they knew so much more about the business of detecting criminals than we did ourselves.

I determined to ferret out the dens of these scoundrels, and, if possible, get myself enticed into them, being perfectly confident that I could thwart them, once I discovered a clew to their identity.

I discovered one quicker than I expected.

Knowing that many of the robberies were committed at large public balls, I got myself up in full-dress one evening and attended a high-toned affair at the Academy.

Here it was that I met Ma'm'selle Berthe, as she was called, and took up the end of the thread which led me through the labyrinths of criminal life, and finally brought me face to face with the rogues for whom I was searching.

It happened thus:

She dropped her fan; I picked it up, and trod on her dress, then apologized; a tall, full-bearded man came up, and asked the lady who her companion was. I introduced myself as Montague Darrel, of London, on a visit to New York.

Conversation became general, and I learned that the elderly party was General d'Aumont, retired from active service, and that the lady was his daughter, though it seemed to me she must have been nearly as old as himself.

Ma'm'selle Berthe had once been a remarkably beautiful woman, but nature had long since called in the aid of art to simulate those ripe charms which she could no longer present in their fullness and freshness.

I danced several times with the lady, who was exceedingly fascinating, and when supper was announced it was upon my strong arm that the lovely woman rested as we walked in with the rest, while the general secured some wealthy wall-flower whom he honored with his attentions.

I noticed upon my partner's lovely neck a locket of peculiar shape, and it struck me at once that it was strikingly like the one that had been stolen from Mr. Blake with the exception that there were no diamonds upon it.

I said nothing about it at the time, but determined to trace the history of that locket, for very often trivial things will do more toward unraveling a case than more important ones, as it is the trifles that are generally overlooked, and these often lead to detection.

I accompanied Ma'm'selle Berthe home after the ball, and received an earnest invitation to call again; in fact, I overheard the general telling Berthe in French, a language which I thoroughly understood, that here was a bird worth picking if he was handled right.

I let myself be encouraged, accompanied Berthe to concerts, operas and balls, called upon her mornings, lunched with her, took her riding, and in fact paid her every attention, scattering money with a lavish hand.

I noticed that the general had many secret conferences with flashy-looking men in the back parlor, Berthe saying that they were his creditors, and that they tormented the life out of him.

I thought I recognized two of these inexorable creditors as notorious confidence men, but my own disguise was so perfect that I knew my identity was safe, and consequently could work to the best advantage.

I had these two fellows shadowed and I found that there was a big job on hand, and that the general and Berthe were both concerned in it.

I had satisfied the creditors once or twice, and one evening I playfully asked ma'm'selle why she did not sell her locket. She blushed, and said it was a present from an old lover of hers, now dead, and that she never could part with it.

I mentioned that it was curiously like one which had been described in the newspapers as belonging to a Mr. Blake, who had been robbed.

At last, one day, I had my plans all laid, and was fully prepared to spring a trap upon the villains.

I was expected by ma'm'selle to accompany her to a ball in the evening, and arrayed in full dress, with a light overcoat and silk hat, I approached the stately mansion hired by the general with considerable apprehension.

I had secured false keys to the outer door, having had the house watched for some time, and this night I entered cautiously, somewhat in advance of the appointed hour.

There was no one in the parlors, and running lightly up the broad staircase, I approached the

boudoir of Ma'm'selle Berthe, knowing that she would be there.

I paused behind the heavy curtains that concealed the doorway, hearing voices in the boudoir, and being very much interested in what was said, too much so, in fact, to show myself just then.

"We will have to get rid of him to-night," I heard the general say, "or he will ruin our plans. There's that burglary at Mr. X——'s, and the garroting case of Mr. Waggles. I think he is up to both of them and will try and stop them."

"You must not harm a hair of his head!" ma'm'selle said, coldly and firmly. "I will not allow it. I am sick of this business and ready to leave the country forever."

"You are getting childish."

"I am not. You shall not harm him, and I will assist you no longer."

"You will betray us?"

"No, but I will warn him. Remember, Mr. Darrell must go unharmed."

"I wonder that he, out of all your admirers, has escaped. What is the reason?"

I had often asked myself why no attempt had been made on my life, and I awaited the serious answer with great anxiety.

It soon came.

"Because he has a power over me which I could neither explain nor withstand. I know he is always armed; he could not conceal that from me, though he is so clever, but it was not that which prevented me from giving your assassins the word."

"What was it, then?" asked the general, angrily, and I confess I longed for the true reason as much as he.

I could hardly breathe until I had heard it from her own lips.

The reply startled me, for I had never once dreamed of such a thing.

"I loved him from the first. I, who have withstood the attacks of obdurate men, and never gave any of them one spark of real encouragement. I, the heartless siren, your so-called daughter—ha, ha! who would suspect I was your wife—love Montague Darrel, and would have him!"

"You would not be false to me?" he hissed, advancing.

"No! Why should I not be, however? There was never any love lost between us. Still, I shall keep to my bargain, but you must not dare to harm him. Remember!"

"What would you do if we did harm him?"

"Betray you and all your secrets! Give you up to the authorities!"

He must have made an advance upon her, though I could not see him, for I heard her arise, and then I could hear her speak, warningly:

"Beware! Advance no further."

"Tut—tut! I meant nothing, Berthe," I heard him say. "Sit down and compose yourself. I will go and see if he has yet arrived."

I hastily retreated and glided into a closet, as he came out and advanced to the head of the stairs. He looked down and then called to one of the servants, asking if I had arrived.

"No? Ah, very well. Send him up at once when he does." Then, walking away softly, I heard him say to himself: "She will play us false, but I shall not give her a chance. This little powder will settle the business!"

He then entered the boudoir and I followed

noiselessly, and, peering through the curtains, saw him empty the contents of a little paper into a wine glass, which he filled and left on the salver, helping himself to a drink in another glass.

His back was turned to me, but he soon crossed the room and I withdrew, and presently walked heavily up the stairs and entered the ante-room leading from the boudoir, where I called out asking if I could come in.

The general answered affirmatively, and I entered.

He was standing by the fireplace; and Ma'm'selle Berthe, all dressed for the ball, was reclining in a low couch-like chair, her head thrown back upon a soft rug of some white fur, one foot on an ottoman, and her hands resting gracefully in her lap.

She seemed asleep as I entered, the flush of health being still upon her cheeks.

I advanced slowly, gazed upon her silent face for a moment, and then, with one hurried motion, passed my hand across her forehead, and knew in an instant that Ma'm'selle Berthe was dead.

Looking the man sternly in the face, I pointed to the dead woman, waving my left hand over her head and said, bitterly:

"Your wife is dead, General d'Aumont, and you have poisoned her!"

He rushed upon me like a fury, but quick as thought I dashed the glass in his face, and drew my revolver.

He had drawn one, too, and there we stood facing each other like two tigers, he nervous and excited, I perfectly cool and determined.

"M'm'selle will not go to the ball to-night!" he said.

"Neither will I. Put up that weapon, or I'll shoot you down in half a minute!"

He threw it down, but, making a sudden spring for the bell rope, pulled it twice, and then, as I fired, dropped to the floor and tried to make his escape.

I ran to the window, threw it up and whistled to one of my men, and in a few moments the house was guarded front and rear.

A number of ruffians rushed in upon me, but I kept them at bay until help arrived by holding the general between them and me.

When they saw they were baffled, they tried to escape but every one was caught, and the whole gang is now lodged in jail, with the exception of General d'Aumont, alias Murdering Jim, who was recognized, when his false beard and wig were off, as a notorious thief and murderer.

He attempted to escape from the cars while on his way to Sing Sing and was run over and killed.

I secured a decent burial for Ma'm'selle Berthe in a quiet corner in Greenwood, knowing that it was to her agency I owed the preservation of my life; and no one suspects that under the modest slab of granite repose the mortal remains of the terrible siren whose smiles meant robbery and her caresses death for the luckless man whom she attracted.

She had been attracted by the locket stolen from Blake, and had had it altered, not supposing it would be recognized, or that upon so trifling a thing as that hung her life and the fate of the gang.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

LORD PENTLAND SAILS ON LINER WITH
JOB IN ENGINE ROOM

Anxious to get practical experience in engineering, which he is studying at Cambridge, Lord Pentland, whose maternal grandparents are the Marquis and Marchioness of Aberdeen, sailed as a worker in the engine room of the *Mauretania* recently. The youthful peer is just 21 years old.

Young Lord Pentland, second Baron, succeeded to the title in 1925. His father, who was Captain John Sinclair, was secretary and controller of the household of the Marquis of Aberdeen when the Marquis was Governor General of Canada.

2,400 CHICAGO CABARET GIRLS PLAN
UNION FOR HIGHER PAY

Chicago's 2,400 chorus girls have decided to organize a labor union for the promotion of more cash and less conversation. So announces Miss Lorita Clevenger, in charge of organization work.

"The idea," said Miss Clevenger, "is to give the girls a break. We want to make it unnecessary for cabaret chorus girls to sit at the tables with guests, as they do in many places now."

Thirty-five dollars a week for chorus girls working in town and \$10 more while on the road were the figures Miss Clevenger suggested as minimum salaries.

CANTON INSTALLS EXCHANGE FOR
AUTOMATIC TELEPHONES

In rebuilding its telephone system, ruined in the orgy of destruction which marked the Communist rising of December, 1927, and its suppression, Canton has chosen the most modern American equipment. An automatic exchange with 4,000 telephones as a starter has been ordered from the United States, and preliminary work has begun under the direction of American-educated Chinese engineers.

The automatic exchange is expected to be merely the nucleus of a much larger system planned to serve this city of more than 1,000,000 inhabitants as funds become available. The initial phase of installation will cost \$325,000.

CLERGY PROTEST CABARET

At a recent meeting of a committee of five members of the Ministerial Alliance of Brooklyn, composed of negro ministers, in the study of Rev. Dr. Hugh Henry Proctor in 57 Lefferts Place, Brooklyn, pastor of the Nazarene Congregational Church, a letter of protest to Borough President Byrne was drawn up voicing objections to the granting of a license to Walter Johnson of 97 De Kalb Avenue, Brooklyn, to open a cabaret on the premises of 228 Ashland Place, opposite the negro branch of the Y. M. C. A. at 221 Ashland Place.

The action was taken by the committee following the efforts of Mrs. Richard W. Westbrook, Chairman of the negro branch of the Y. W. C. A.,

on May 16 to prevent the issuing of a license for the cabaret of that location. Mrs. Westbrook at that time got in touch with Borough President Byrne and was informed by Commissioner of Licenses Patrick Diamond that the license would not be granted because of the unsuitability of the building.

Since that time extensive alterations have been carried out in the building at 228 Ashland Place, and a sign, "Roseland," has been hung out in front of it.

BRITISH ROYAL UMBRELLAS CHECKED
LIKE COMMONERS'

The King and Queen of England, like 40,000,000 of their subjects, are seldom seen without a capacious umbrella hooked over one arm.

Once one has encountered a London downpour he can sympathize with them. The precaution, however, has its disadvantages, for should one want to drop into a picture gallery to get out of the wet he must relinquish the umbrella and run the risk of losing the elusive metal tag which alone will enable him to reclaim it.

But then even the King and Queen take this risk. When they paid a private visit to an exhibition of antiques the other day his Majesty's quick eye read the notice stating that all walking sticks and umbrellas must be checked at the entrance, and immediately insisted on surrendering his own and the Queen's in spite of the curator's remonstrance that an exception be made in their behalf.

NOW THE COUNTRY "SHACK" IS BEING
MADE READY FOR THE SUMMER

The young woman in business who owns what she calls her "shack" in the country is busy these days getting ready for occupancy. She is spending her week-ends, usually unaided, unboarding windows and doors, sweeping and scrubbing the floors, sawing wood and carrying it in to start fires to rid the place of the Winter's dampness. She is washing windows, putting up the fresh curtains she has brought from town, uncovering the beds and chairs, filling the lamp, laying in supplies for staples and probably discovering that she must include in her purchases a mouse trap or two. Altogether, she will work harder for several weekends in succession probably than she has all the preceding week days—and look better for it.

These little houses, some boasting of only one room, but always with a porch, usually larger than the interior, gratify the longing every woman knows for "a home of her own." They are numerous in all the countryside around New York City and may be detected by the very trim appearance of tiny door cards; by the drop-leaf table on the porch, which becomes a settee when not in use as a table; by the trowel with a vivid-colored handle stuck in the lattice of the porch; and other little touches that denote an unusually efficient rusticity.

CURRENT NEWS

ITALIAN EMIGRATION BAN SHOWS EFFECT IN PRUSSIA

The restriction of Italian emigration since Mussolini became dictator shows its effect in the decrease of Italian workers in Prussia. They equaled 110,000, or 12 per cent., of the number of foreign workers before the war. This percentage decreased to 1.9 per cent. in 1927, according to official statistics.

The number of foreigners finding employment in Prussia was 197,317 last year. Of these 92,307 had labor permits, placing them on a par with German workers. They belonged in the main to German families in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Austria, Holland and Yugoslavia.

The majority of other foreign labor is employed in agriculture and is overwhelmingly Polish.

COTTON MILLS SPREAD WESTWARD OVER THE STATES OF THE SOUTH

Formerly all the South's raw cotton which was not sold abroad went to New England and only about 5 per cent. were in the South. Now, according to recent estimates, of the more than 32,000,000 active cotton spindles, 40 per cent. are in New England and 54 per cent. in the South. New England has only half again as many active spindles today as it had half a century ago; whereas the South has thirty-two times as many.

Southern cotton mills in 1926 consumed as much cotton as was grown in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee. This was 65 per cent. of all the cotton consumed by the mills of the United States. They manufacture, it is said, fifty-eight of every 100 yards of woven cotton goods made in the United States.

BERLIN TEACHES COURTESY TO 7,000 CAR CONDUCTORS

Berlin's 7,000 street car conductors, youngsters fresh in the service, middle-aged men and gray-beards, are being taught in evening classes how to handle their passengers in the approved manner.

"Be courteous always; be suave and diplomatic at times; don't forget that passengers are human beings and not mere parcels of freight," the lesson runs.

"Remember your passengers may have parred nerves through business worries. Maybe they had a bad night or their morning coffee was cold.

"There are times when it is expedient not to hear, to see or to answer back," the lecturer urges.

"Never mind if you think the passenger himself needs a lesson in politeness. It is up to you to use common sense and discernment."

Niceties of behavior toward women passengers are carefully explained to the men.

BANKER FLYING TO THE COAST RECALLS COVERED WAGON DAYS

William D. Longyear, Treasurer of the American Bankers' Association and Vice-President of the Security Trust and Savings Bank of

Los Angeles, as passenger in one of the trimotored Fokkers that flew from Mitchel Field to California recently, asserted just before the take-off that American bankers are becoming "air-minded."

He has found, he said, that the men who handle the country's money are getting behind commercial aviation because they are convinced that it is to play an important part in the development of the nation.

"To visualize for myself the transport progress that is being made in the United States," said Mr. Longyear, "all I have to do is to recall that my father went to California in a covered wagon, taking many arduous months to reach his destination; that when I was a youth I left my home in Kalamazoo in a freight car that took nine days to get to San Diego.

"My father made his trip in 1852; I made mine in 1889. Later, in 1916, I took my family by motor car from Los Angeles to Detroit in twenty-one days, with overnight stops. We thought that was speedy traveling. Now I am preparing to leave New York for Los Angeles in an \$80,000 airplane, fitted out with every modern convenience, which, if pressed, could complete the trip in thirty-six hours."

AUSTRIAN LABOR DISPLACED BY MACHINES, JOBS INCREASE

In view of the rate at which labor-saving machinery is displacing workers in the Austrian Republic it is considered remarkable in European labor circles that the little country has been able to reduce the number of its unemployed drawing doles during the last two years. This is partly explained by the municipal construction activities of the City of Vienna; these furnish work for many thousands who otherwise would be idle, and at the same time they reduce the housing shortage.

In Austria every application for a permit to import foreign-made labor-saving machinery duty free has to go through the hands of the Austrian Engineering Association. It keeps records of those imports; consequently, it is possible to present accurate data on the pace at which mechanization is proceeding.

Every week an average of about 100 import permits are issued. Last year the number of labor-saving machines ordered from Austrian firms was about 6,500, making a total, with those imported, of from 11,500 to 12,000 new machines in 1927 alone.

In analyzing these figures, the Amsterdam Bureau off the International Federation of Trade Unions points out that last year labor-saving machinery alone rendered from 40,000 to 50,000 workers superfluous, of whom 25,000 lived in Vienna.

It is added that at the same time investigation by the Austrian Chambers of Labor has shown an increase in the output of labor estimated at from 20 to 40 per cent.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

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